

**Roma-Gypsy Presence
in the Polish-Lithuanian
Commonwealth**

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LECH MRÓZ

**Roma-Gypsy Presence
in the Polish-Lithuanian
Commonwealth
15th–18th centuries**



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Nádor utca 11, H-1051 Budapest, Hungary

Tel: +36 1 327 3138 or 327 3000

Fax: +36 1 327 3183

E-mail: ceupress@press.ceu.edu

Website: www.ceupress.com

224 West 57th Street, New York NY 10019, USA

Tel: +1 212 547 6932

Fax: +1 646 557 2416

E-mail: meszarosa@press.ceu.edu

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Preface and Acknowledgements

The aim of the author of this work is to bring the history of Gypsies closer to us, the knowledge of which is very limited, verging on non-existent. The book is mainly addressed to the Gypsy-Roma community and to scholars of Romani history and culture, as a source of information about the past of the group. It can also serve as a source of material for school textbooks.

This book is the result of several years of archival and literary research. The research was mainly funded from the resources of the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Warsaw. I was able to reach some of the materials thanks to grants from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, as well as my own funds. This laborious research would not have been possible without the help of a number of people who have been cooperating with me for a number of years. I owe some very important leads and information to them. I would like to thank Halina Szymanel and Ruta Šrubienienė from the archive in Vilnius, as well as Romas Firkievičius, an expert on the Vilnius archive collections. I am also grateful to Natalia Piatrevič for her help in reaching the documents in the Minsk archive; without her assistance I would not have managed to access many of them, despite knowing where the searched documents were probably located. My most sincere thanks also go to Natalya Tsariova from the archive in Lviv, as well as to the director and other staff of this archive; thanks to their goodwill and help I was able to find documents there that have been exceptionally important for my work. I would also like to thank Franciszek Zacny and the management of the archive in Wawel, Kraków, where I spent a great deal of time. I am also very grateful to the staff of the archives and libraries in Ełk, Gdańsk, Kraków, Lublin, Olsztyn, Poznań, Toruń, Warsaw, and

Wrocław, as well as the Warsaw Central Archives of Historical Records, and in particular to Jarosław Zawadzki. My sincere appreciation and admiration go to Michał Kulecki from the same archives, my long-term colleague, consultant, adviser, and often teacher. He also toiled over deciphering the Latin and German texts as well as their translations. I am very indebted to Krystyna Wiśniewska for her assistance with microfilms, and to Ewa Milczarczyk for her patient typing of the documents and her help in their selection and ordering. Whereas without the competent and friendly help of Krystyna Dudzińska, MA and Dr. Agnieszka Halemba from the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology—who took up the effort of securing funding for the translation and publishing of this book in English—the presentation of the results of my research to a wider range of non-Polish speaking researchers and readers generally interested in the history of the Gypsy-Roma, would not have been possible. I am deeply grateful to each and every one of them.



The oldest known image of the Gypsies from Poland. Woodcut image from a book on manor economy: Jakub Kazimierz Haur, *Skład abo skarbiec znakomych sekretów oekonomii ziemiańskiej*, Kraków, 1693. The clothes of the depicted Gypsies indicate that they arrived from Hungary (probably from Transylvania).

Introduction

For hundreds of years, the Gypsies have attracted the attention of chroniclers, writers and artists. In particular, the Romantic period in literature and music gave birth to a wide range of works in which Gypsies figured prominently. Their wandering habit of life, and their mere existence seemingly unbound by the laws defining the behavior and life of an average settled person, aroused the interest and imagination of artists. Hence, the Gypsies became something more than just a community intriguing others with their difference, cultural characteristics and way of life. They became a symbol of freedom and independence. Artistic circles adopted names from Gypsies: the terms “artistic bohemianism” or “Bohemians” have an unambiguous etymology.

Stereotypical, simplified perceptions of Gypsies have been evolving for generations, for centuries. Even today knowledge about them—especially that of the so-called average person—is very limited, and this concerns not just Poland. The Gypsies are still treated as a folklore curiosity, as people equally mysterious and suspicious, simultaneously fascinating and repelling. The world of painted carts, which could still be seen on Polish roads about forty years ago, does not exist anymore, yet it has not fallen into oblivion. On the contrary, it is astounding just how widespread this image is, and how often it is evoked by people who do not know it from their own experience: wandering Gypsies, tents and camps next to a forest, bonfires at dusk, figures sitting around a fire in a forest clearing, long colorful skirts and wide trousers, palm reading and trading in horses or pans. The contemporary world of Gypsies is very different from that image, and not just in Poland. Also, Gypsies themselves feel the need to break away from the perceptions and attitudes that have accompanied them

for generations. The aspirations of the majority of today's Polish Gypsies are the same as those of other national groups. They do not want to be treated as pariahs; they do not want to be Gypsies. For this reason their organizations and political leaders tend to use the term "Roma" instead of "Gypsy" (in Polish "cygan") as their proper name and self-identification. At the same time, a considerable part of the Gypsy population in the country, including their traditional authorities and leaders, has not forsaken the term "Gypsy" and has not replaced it with the term "Roma," reserving the latter exclusively for internal use within their own community. In external relations, i.e., contacts with non-Gypsies, they still identify themselves as "Gypsies."

For six hundred years Gypsies have made up one of the elements of the cultural and ethnic mosaic of the Polish lands. Yet, their several-hundred year history is completely unknown. They, the Gypsy-Roma, could not study their own past and analyze historical sources due to the lack of their own developed intelligentsia stratum. Their history has been written by non-Gypsies. This was the case in earlier days, when chroniclers and authors of various works noted and described their presence. The situation is not so different nowadays: the researchers of archival documents and authors of historical works devoted to the past of this community have almost exclusively been non-Gypsies. Yet, even their interest has been rather limited. What usually most attracts the attention of scholars or writers is the Gypsies' particularity, their exoticism, and not their history and fate in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Hence, for centuries a lack of awareness with regard to their past has been predominant.

There is also another fundamental reason for the current state of affairs. Gypsies did not create their own written ethnic memory, as they were predominantly an illiterate nation. To a large extent, this was the result of their way of life and a manifestation of their fate in Europe. Researcher also cannot rely on the Gypsies' memory as an oral source to supplement and verify written sources. The reason for this is that Gypsies far too often found themselves under the influence of different milieus, and new and changing surroundings. Therefore they could not have escaped borrowings from other cultures and considerable influences on their own notions, ideas, and perceptions. Hence, when attempting to reconstruct and describe their past, we

must rely exclusively on sources created by their observers and critics: non-Gypsies. The stories of the Gypsy-Roma themselves (which contemporary scholars have recorded from time to time), can only be a source for their communal history, or serve as indirect information about their past (e.g., a study of the quality and quantity of loan words in the language and culture of the most numerous group in Poland, *Polska Roma*, demonstrates their relations with Polish culture). Whereas the attempts of Gypsy authors to present their own history, the history of their community from a Gypsy perspective, should be qualified as attempts to construct their national mythology and not as historical accounts, true images of the past.

There have been only a handful of scholars of the history of Gypsies in Poland. Of the 19th-century scholars, the most significant contribution in the field of the Gypsy history studies was made by Tadeusz Czacki, followed by Ignacy Daniłowicz and Teodor Narbutt. In the 20th century, our knowledge of this topic was enriched with interesting texts by Antoni Prochaska and Teodor E. Modelski. In recent times, only Jan Broda and, in particular, Jerzy Ficowski have studied this topic in greater detail. The advancement of historical studies and improving mastery of the archival sources shed an even greater light on the gaping lack of progress in researching the history of Gypsies. The study of their past is becoming a matter of considerable urgency not only for purely scientific reasons. Contemporary standards, the rights and entitlements of ethnic minorities demand the study of the history of Gypsies. Today, probably no leader of this community in Poland or in other countries has doubts about the need to provide general education to their children. The issue of learning their own language and culture, including the history of their long past, has also gained considerable prominence.

I have been working on the topic of the Gypsy-Roma in Poland for many years now. The study of their culture and attempts to describe this community have inevitably led me to look at their past. Without knowing their history, it has been impossible to explain various elements of their contemporary culture. Since Gypsies have the right to education, they must also have the right and opportunity to learn about their own culture and history. The great majority of facts discussed in this work had previously been unknown. The documents

presented and discussed here, evidence of the Gypsies' past presence in the former Commonwealth, with all certainty can be useful for studying their past in neighboring countries. What is more, due to the wandering way of life of many Gypsy groups, the information contained in this work may be helpful for reconstructing fragments of their history in more distant countries as well. Finally, this work will also benefit Gypsies from other countries by contributing to their knowledge about the wider Gypsy community.

This book contains a number of copies of historical records. In order to present the meaning of the documents, as well as the specific climate of the historical periods as faithfully as possible, the original character of the documents has been preserved. The documents offer the opportunity for scholars from other countries to acquaint themselves with the texts in their original form and to draw their own conclusions and formulate their own interpretations of them. Translation of the documents written in Latin, Ruthenian or German, according to the rules of translation of old documents, would have been a considerable hindrance in the translation of this book into English. For this reason, the documents written in archaic Polish, as well as those written in Latin, German, or (old) Ruthenian are accompanied with a translation into contemporary Polish and English. The additional explanations and commentaries might seem redundant to professional historians, but will be useful or even indispensable for others, in particular for scholars of Gypsy culture and the community of people generally interested in the history and culture of this group.



Reconstructing the history of any community is a challenging and responsible task, and the deeper into the past we go, the more difficult it becomes. Bringing the world of the past closer to the reader in a way that is faithful to reality is possible only when we have at our disposal an adequate number of various sources, which supplement one another and enable mutual verification. However, behind every entry, every record, there is a human being, an involuntary interpreter of the reality, in which he lives and bears witness to. Hence, almost every medium from the past, including the written ones, bears traces of the culture, language, ethnicity, religion or social position of the

chronicler or author of the record, just as well as his own personal characteristics. Every historian and every person who attempts to describe a given community at its earlier stages of development is aware of this. These are also the challenges faced by ethnologists when they attempt to depict a given ethnic group, to reach to its earlier cultural forms, to unravel its structure or the organizational principles of its cultural specificity on the basis of oral sources, scarce records and fragments of material objects.

The above reservations concern any community. Yet, there are certain cases when reconstructing the times past and the history of a group is an exceptionally laborious task, with results uncertain or difficult to foresee. The Gypsies—today referred to in many countries as the Roma, according to the rules of political correctness—are such a special case, a community exceptional in many regards. There are many reasons for considering Gypsies to be a special case, and the writing of their history to be a particular challenge, or a task that demands exceptional caution in forming our opinions. The reason for this has already been mentioned: there are no sources left by the Gypsies themselves. The ancestors of today's Gypsies left India at least ten centuries ago (and possibly earlier; this issue has been vigorously debated by scholars, in particular scholars of the Gypsy language). This earliest part of their history, before their arrival in Central and Eastern Europe, has been lost in the “twilight of the past.”



Many authors writing about the early history of the Gypsies reiterate the opinion that the first reliable record of the Gypsies' presence comes from the 11th century, from one of monasteries on Mount Athos. However, usually they repeat the opinion citing previous authors, without attempts to verify the information. Only Soulis (1961) paid closer attention to this record from Athos and quoted its text in his work on the Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire. The record refers to the presence of a people called *Adsincani* in Constantinople. The information originally came from the hagiographic treatise, entitled *The Life of St. George* (1009–1065), written in the Iberon monastery on Mount Athos, circa 1068, by one of the Saint's disciples. Soulis cites a story that in 1050 some wild animals had nested in the Emperor's

park Philopation in Constantinople, which made the organization of hunting events impossible. Emperor Constantine Monomachus (1042–1055) decided to invite the *Adsincani*, the famous magicians, to exterminate those wild animals (Soulis 1961, 145).

Soulis relied on the Latin text. Here we approach the most significant issue, completely ignored by those who often refer to this document. The Iberon monastery, where the document came from, was a Georgian monastery. There are monasteries of various Orthodox churches on Mount Athos, including a Georgian one, which was established in the mid-9th century (Haussig 1980, 278).¹ The monk who described the life of St. George wrote his text in Georgian. Thus, the original of the *Life of St. George (Giorgi Mt`ac`mideli)*,² was written in the mid-11th century in Georgian. *Adsincani*—a term, which according to many scholars, refers to the Gypsies—is not a word of Georgian origin. When Soulis (and others) referred to this document, they relied not on the original, which they probably did not know, but the Latin translation. As we learn from specialist literature, the *Life of St. George Mtasmideli*, about a Georgian monk from the Iberon Monastery on Mount Athos, was translated into Greek and placed in this version in the *Thesaurus fidei* of the Dominican Buonaccorsi from Bologna in the 13th century (Jurewicz 1984, 196).

It is most likely that the Latin translation was made on the basis of the Greek text, due to the presence of a word of Greek origin, *Athin-ganoi*, in the Latin version. It was the Latin text that gave Soulis and others the grounds to claim that the *Adsincani* were known in Constantinople in the 11th century. According to many authors, since the term *Adsincani* referred to people known from later accounts as the Gypsies (and their equivalents in various languages), the conclusion of many authors is that the Gypsies were in Constantinople in

¹ There are different spellings of the name of the monastery in different works: Iberon or Iviron. According to an authority on the Caucasus, Lang, the Iviron monastery was founded in 980 by Ioannes Varazvache Chordvani and his son Euthymius, who later became the superior of the monastery, a saint, as well as a translator of many religious works into Georgian (Lang 1972, 85).

² The name of the saint in European literature is spelled as Giorgi Mt`ac`mideli or Mtasmideli. Lang uses the term Giorgi the Hagiorite. He was a successor of Euthymius and the author of the treatise *The Life of St. Euthymius* from Athos (Lang 1972, 135).

the 11th century, and that we can find information about their sojourn in this city in the records of one of the monasteries on Mount Athos.

The story about the deeds of St. George is known also from other Georgian documents. It is presented in the *Iberia Chronicle*, written in 1072–1073, which belongs to the *Georgian Annals* (*K'art'lis–Cxovreba*) (Toumanoff 1943, 173–174). This document, however, does not mention the *Adsincani*. The account from the *Iberia Chronicle* appears to confirm that the Georgian original of the *Life of St. George* had not mentioned the *Adsincani*, and the word was introduced only later, by the author of the Greek translation (in the form of *Athinganoi*). This means that the *Life of St. George* cannot be treated as a source of the history of the Gypsies and the first record of their presence in the territory of Europe.

European chroniclers started to note the presence of Gypsies only from the middle of the 14th century (at least according to our current knowledge of archival sources). But we cannot be sure that they had not arrived earlier, and chroniclers simply did not pay attention to them, or that earlier records were lost. The texts of the earliest known records do not allow us to disregard any of these possibilities.



From that period onwards, the routes of Gypsy wanderings and the network of settlements spread to almost the whole of Europe. Also, the number of documents referring to the Gypsies grew every decade, including records of their appearance and clothes, sometimes their way of life, occupations, or speculations about their origin. The analysis of these sources demonstrates that the culture of European societies has had a significant impact on Gypsy culture for centuries. They did not only adopt patterns of behavior, but were also aware of the stereotypical image of themselves, popular in non-Gypsy communities. We can also note that they often attempted to take advantage of this by living up to their image and confirming the perceptions of non-Gypsies with regard to them. It might have been convenient to adapt to the role, or at least to the social space allocated to them, in mediaeval and renaissance Europe. The story recounted by them, but probably not invented by them, about their Egyptian origin and their wandering as a form of penance for ancestors having

resisted the Christian faith, is a good illustration of this phenomenon. The spreading of this story by Gypsies themselves, and their use of forged recommendation letters, proves that they took up the role allocated to them. It is obvious that these events were not without significance for their own worldview. The Gypsies recognized the principles of mimesis or imitation, making sure that they did not excessively stand out in the non-Gypsy community, in order to avoid aggression as well as to make their sojourn or life easier; this imitation considerably impacted their culture and way of life. The current diversification of the Gypsy community is, to a large extent, the result of the choice of different locations for their sojourns and wanderings, and the ensuing adoption of various elements of local cultures. This is manifested by their language (or rather dialects) and cultural features, including both, those easily noticeable, as well as those more internal, pertaining to their ethnic identity, their sphere of customs and traditions, the vision of their place in the world and in relation to other Gypsy groups.

When we analyze Gypsy culture, we realize rather quickly that any attempt to look for a prototype, an original, or some pure form of what one might call "Gypsiness," are doomed to failure. We cannot pass judgments today as to which of the existing Gypsy groups are more authentic and possess a culture that has been least contaminated by foreign influences. The Indian elements in Gypsy culture are almost non-existent, with the exception of the language. The initial influences that formed their way of life and culture originated in Byzantium and Southeastern Europe. These were supplemented by the influences of the successive communities, within which Gypsies found themselves as a result of their migrations into the heart of Europe in the beginning of the 15th century. The Gypsies are a more diverse community than the majority of other European ethnic groups. If we compare the tongues, customs, dress and other elements of their culture, as well as the anthropological features of Gypsies from different parts of Europe, we will come to the obvious conclusion that we encounter a hugely diverse community, hidden under the umbrella term of "Gypsies." Up to this day some Gypsies lead lives that entail changing places. A hundred or more years ago, nomadism was the way of life of many European Gypsy groups that

today are settled. They wandered among different countries, crossed various linguistic, religious and cultural spheres, sometimes within one and the same country, and sometimes undertaking much longer journeys. Archival records, especially the oldest sources, usually do not mention much in detail, and we often do not know whether we encounter a settled group or a new arrival. Hence, we cannot be sure whether the information we analyze is an account of a successive migratory wave, or rather an account of the history of already mentioned groups. This is a fundamental inconvenience with regard to any attempt at presenting the history of Gypsies. Those who were leading settled lives, residents of cities and well-off people, adopted the patterns of urban life and probably did not see the need to record their Gypsy differences; their way of life was conducive to assimilation. Those who led a life of wandering had even less reasons to record their existence. Neither their habit of life nor the specific philosophy behind it allowed it: their orientation was towards the future and not towards the past, their efforts were put into maintaining their biological existence, perseverance, the survival of one's family and the group. "The Roma lived in a perpetual present: memories, dreams, desires, hungers, the urge toward a tomorrow, all were rooted in the present. Without *now* there was no *before*, just as there could be no *after*" (Yoores 1967, 35). This sentence, written by a person who was not born a Gypsy but who spent many years of his early childhood in a Gypsy group living according to its rules and principles, introduces us to the essence of the philosophy of Gypsy groups' life.

With the passage of time, the way of life that the wandering groups had tried to evade has finally caught up with them. Administrative constraints, as well as the impact of non-Gypsy communities, and relentless industrial, economic and technological changes cannot be escaped so easily. Gypsy horse dealers, fortune-tellers, and craftsmen cannot compete with mass production and contemporary forms of business, and cannot arrest the changes in the mentality of the surrounding non-Gypsy community, as well as that of their own youth. The notable increase in the level of education and the formation of their own intelligentsia stratum, as well as political changes in contemporary Europe, have led to the establishment of Gypsy political organizations along with attempts to build a supra-local

and supra-national community within the whole Gypsy population. These endeavors have also led them to seek a universal form of culture, preserve common elements of the culture, undertake attempts to create one language to replace the multiple dialects, and realize the need for education, including that of their own history. Due to the lack of their own (historical) sources, Gypsies have no choice but to use non-Gypsy accounts and records, bearing in mind, however, that they represent the perspective of an alien community, one that was often hostile or at least, unfavorably disposed towards Gypsies. Yet, these sources do not match the aspirations of the activists among the Gypsy intelligentsia, who wish to raise national awareness. Rather than history, they need a national mythology. It is easy to understand why historical treatises by leaders, politicians and activists of Gypsy origin depict a history of Roma that abounds in lofty heroic episodes and the names of kings and famous people, who were allegedly related to the ancestors of contemporary Gypsies. For many such people the history I present here will not be sufficiently glorious and magnificent.



In the title of this book I have used the term “Roma-Gypsy.” This is not the best solution, as these two terms do not have exactly the same meaning, and the contexts of their usage are different. More and more often those who had used the word “Gypsy” until very recently, have switched to using the word “Roma,” assuming that the former word is a pejorative. Political correctness and educational endeavors have also led the non-Roma or non-Gypsy media to increasingly replace the word “Gypsy” with the word “Roma.” What is more, while one might assume that all the Gypsies living today in Poland are Roma, we cannot be certain that this was always the case. For this reason, I fall back on the word “Gypsy” as a term with a relatively broader scope than the word “Roma,” the use of which in some cases is simply not justified. There is another, more serious argument in favor of not rejecting the term “Gypsy.” Projection of today’s attitudes and political needs into the distant past would be a considerable mistake. Discarding the word “Gypsy” in favor of “Roma,” despite the fact that it does not appear in the documents (to be precise, it appears once),

would lead to misrepresentation. We do not know much about the awareness and identity of those mentioned in the old documents; however, we do not have any grounds to believe that they considered themselves Roma in the contemporary meaning of the word. The process of the maturation of national or ethnic awareness of the European peoples was a long one, and only in the 19th century did the clear crystallization of the identities of many European nations occur. There are no reasons to believe that Gypsies had gone through the process of the formation of a national awareness before that. Their way of life and the different cultural contexts in which they lived were rather slowing this process down. It seems that only now has the time for working out of their own Gypsy or Roma identity arrived.



The scope of this work covers the period from the earliest records of the Gypsies' presence in Poland (to be more precise, in the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a country that comprised not only of today's Poland and Lithuania, but also the western part of Belarus and considerable territories of contemporary Ukraine) in the beginning of the 15th century, until the times of King Stanisław August Poniatowski and the period of the Partitions of Poland. The fundamental *caesura* closing this work is the partition of Poland between the Habsburg Empire, Prussia, and Russia (1772), with some exceptions in favor of a slightly later period, if this was demanded by the issue in question. The changes that were taking part in Europe in the second half of the 18th century, the new ideas and intellectual ferment, made this period a time of fundamental transformation, witnessing breakthroughs in thinking, among other things, about Gypsies, including the attitudes and social policy towards them. The partitions also brought about a considerable change in the status of Gypsies, and resulted in the subordination of their lives to the legislations of the partitioning states. As a result, the time after the partitions should be analyzed as a separate period in the history of Gypsies in the Commonwealth. The last quarter of the 18th century brought about changes so considerable, that the last decades of the 18th century and the 19th century should be discussed separately.

The territorial scope of this work reflects the boundaries of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (albeit changing over the centuries), a country inhabited by several nations, speaking different languages, professing various religions. In the 20th century several countries were founded on these territories. The Gypsies travelled along the entire territory of the Commonwealth, across different ethnic, linguistic and religious areas, sometimes narrowing the territory of their peregrinations to one region, or even settling permanently, if that was thought to be favorable in terms of income opportunities and contact with the local population. As a result, different territorial subgroups were formed, which were also reflected in their names. It is obvious that when presenting the history of Gypsies from its earliest times up to the partitions, one needs to refer to the boundaries of the country, and not to the ethnos (which would have been simply impossible). In this way, the present work tells the story of not only the Gypsies living in Poland, but also of the many Gypsies who now live in Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, and Ukraine.

Gypsies from other countries had been also travelling across Poland before it was partitioned between the Habsburg Empire, Prussia, and Russia. This is amply demonstrated by the documents, especially those starting from the 16th century. Some of these newcomers stayed, others moved on. Various documents and studies indicate that some groups that arrived to Russia and Eastern Ukraine had in fact come from Poland. This is reflected in loanwords from the Polish language in dialects still spoken today.



This book is based on the treatise titled *A History of the Gypsy-Roma Presence in the 15th–18th Centuries* (*Dzieje Cyganów – Romów w Rzeczypospolitej. XV–XVIII w.*, published in Warsaw in 2002), which was the result of many years of research. Apart from an account of the history of Gypsies, it contained discussions and analyses of all the documents I was able to find. The present book, targeted towards the non-Polish reader, is shorter, less detailed and contains many changes from the previous 2002 version. The reason for this is obvious; the high level of detail would have made the reception of this already fact-packed book even more difficult. What is more, information and details that

are useful and justified from the perspective of researchers from the geographical region that is also the origin of the archival records in question, may be redundant for researchers from other countries and people generally interested in the history of Gypsies. This is why I have tried to emphasize the representation of the history of Gypsies, the discussion of the issues and analysis, while limiting the presentation of the documents to a minimum. I have included only the most important and interesting documents, taking into account their technical features, their state of preservation and readability. Many of the analyzed records are in a poor condition and reading them was very laborious, requiring many hours and sometimes whole days. In this book, I wanted to present only those acts that could be reproduced and still be legible in print. The paper of the documents has often yellowed from age, the ink has faded or blurred. Hence, only a limited part of the discovered testimonies of Gypsy history could be reproduced. I also do not think that the reproduction of all the documents discussed in this work is vital; I believe it should suffice to limit the presentation to the most important and most representative ones.

Reproductions of the selected documents are included at the end of each relevant chapter, corresponding to the order of their discussion and analysis in the text. Information with regard to the reproduced documents is presented in the chapter in which a given document is discussed. For example, if in the first chapter we find the following cited information (*Acta consularia Casimiriensia*, 1390–1401, k. V, 548; DOC. 1) next to the discussed document, from this we learn in which archive this record can be found, as well as that at the end of this chapter we will find a photocopy of this document, as the first in order (DOC. 1), accompanied by a transcription of the text. If, however, the document reference does not contain the annotation *DOC.*, e.g., (*Liber terrestris Pyzdrensis*, nr 1, k. 148v), it means that this book does not contain a reproduction of this document.

At the end of the book there is a registry of all quoted and discussed records, according to where they can be found, as well as a bibliography. The references to the documents discussed in successive chapters also contain information in italics with regard to the particular collection containing them, e.g., (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 84).

If the title of the acts is too general or ambiguous, there is additional information with regard to the archive in which this document can be found, e.g., (OSSO: rękopis Nr 180/II). Reference information to the documents contains exact letter and digit file numbers, which enables locating them in archival collections. For example, the reference information *Slonimskij zemskij sud, t. I, 1565–1566* [NGAB: F. 1785, op. 1, ed. 1] tells us the type of files and years, and the brackets contain information about the archive this document can be found in, as well as the exact file number of a given volume. In this case, the document is at the Minsk archives in Belarus. Archives in Poland use a different method of filing. The reference *Casimirensia acta maleficiorum, 1548–1610* [APK (III): rękopis K. 266] informs us about the name of the files and the years they date from, which is followed by the information about the archive (Kraków, branch III), and that this is rękopis Nr 266. Whereas the reference *Castrensia Cracoviensia Relationes, t. 127* [APK (I)] contains the title of the files, the volume number, as well as the name of the archive and its branch (Branch I of the Kraków archive). These examples reflect the diversity of the filing systems in different countries, but guarantee that the interested researcher can locate these documents.



Almost all the documents I have presented here were described on the basis of their originals in archives. In situations when getting hold of a given document was not possible due to its destruction, loss or imprecise bibliographical information, I have relied on previously published documents, each time clearly specifying the circumstances.

The issue of permissible interference with the published sources always raises concerns. My assumption is that the sources mentioning the Gypsies should be presented in a way most faithful to the originals. In this way, these thematically coherent collections of documents will be most useful to other scholars. My interference with the documents has been limited to some indispensable changes: e.g., introducing contemporary punctuation in order to make the texts understandable, sometimes changes with regard to small and capitals letters, or the rules of the splitting and joining of words and particles. In an attempt to reflect the exceptional character of these

sources, I have rarely corrected errors made by the authors. I have, however, used the full forms of the popular 15th-century abbreviations, such as *WoXaLo*, standing for the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and *Ao Dni*, standing for *Anno Domini*. I have kept the social formulas such as “*ImC*,” standing for *Jegomość* (His Lordship). Additionally, I have not brought up to date the spelling nor have I corrected logical errors. They do not pose any difficulties in understanding the document, while they reflect the character of the source documents.

Fragments of the documents omitted by the author have been indicated by square brackets []. The numbering of the source pages, indication of fragments omitted by me, emphasizing a word or phrase, have been given in square brackets and in italics, e.g., [*s. 125*], [---], [!], [?].

Due to the considerable diversity of the sources and their chronological span, it has been rather difficult to strictly apply publishing house instructions. However, every source text has been given a reference information heading, containing the serial number of the document, the date of its issuance and a short regest. The translations or summaries following the source texts are intended to help us to understand and to popularize them. Here, I would like to focus for a moment on the translation of the documents. In the case of the first Polish edition of this work, it was possible to translate the Latin, German, or Ruthenian documents into Polish, according to the specific terminology of the period, from which the given document dated. The documents in Polish were presented in their original version, preserving the archaic language. Yet this is neither possible nor expedient in case of the English language publication. For this reason, the present publication includes the original texts of the documents, irrespective of the language they were written in, whereas the citations from the original documents used in the text have been literally translated into contemporary English.

The Arrival of the Gypsies to Poland

*“Next income in Zapłocie [?], on Wednesday before the feast of Marcin [---].
Next Mikołaj Cygan¹ gave half a grzywna². He gave one ferton.”³*

Dating from 1401, this is the earliest written source regarding the presence of Gypsies in Poland (*Acta consul. Casimir*, k. IV, 548; DOC. 1). Roma have been known in Poland under various names, but during the times of their earliest arrivals, the only name that appears in source records is the word “Gypsy.” The terms “Philistines” and “Egyptians” became widespread only later, during the 16th century, most likely brought to Poland by refugees from countries of the Holy Roman Empire.

The first reliable information on the Gypsies in the South-East European countries comes from the end of the 14th century: the records from Dubrovnik about the Gypsies from 1362 and 1368 (Mujić 1953, 144); from Zagreb from 1373 and from Ljubljana from 1387 (Vukanović 1983, 23). In 1385 the ruler of the country, Vlach *Hospodar*⁴ Dan I, in an act of donation to the monastery in Tismana, gave the Monastery of the Virgin Mary 40 “shanties” (*szalas*) for Gypsy families (Potra 1939, 19). Only a dozen or so years later the term “Gypsies” appears in the books of the city of Kazimierz in the south of Poland.

The oldest Polish records do not say anything about Gypsies as a community. Only on the basis of an analysis of their context,

¹ *Cygan* means “Gypsy” in Polish. Here it is used instead of a surname.—Trans.

² *Grzywna* was a measure of weight, mainly for gold and silver, and a monetary unit in medieval Poland, Ruthenia, and Czechia.

³ Translated from Latin: “Item percepta in Zaplocze feria quarta ante festum Martini [---] item Micolay Czigan 1/2 marcum dedit.”

⁴ *Hospodar* is a term of Slavonic origin, meaning “lord” or “master.” Rulers of Vlachia were referred to in Polish writing of the period as *hospodars*.

in which books and records they are found, and in what city their presence was recorded, we can say something about their status, way of life or financial situation. We only learn more about their nomadic habit of life from the 16th century documents, which usually refer to those who came to Poland from Western European countries. The oldest records from the south of Poland (from the first half of the 15th century) only mention the Gypsies, but do not describe them. The documents depict them as settled people, apparently assimilated into the local population: one is a Gypsy by name, not by different culture or even language. In later documents, from the beginning of the 16th century, we encounter information of Gypsies using their own language, as well as that their culture, differed from the local one (even though we do not know whether this was their own culture or whether it was adopted from the place of their last stay). In those oldest records, the word “Gypsy” (*Cygan*) is used as designation of a person, something that allows for identification. Today, we cannot say whether all those called “Gypsies” in the 15th century records were actually people belonging to the Gypsy-Roma community. It is possible that at some point in time, dark hair, dark skin, and other features led to being given the epithet “Gypsy.” Without a doubt, in the beginning of this process there must have been ethnic Gypsies, and only later the term could acquire new meanings. The term had not been known previously in Poland. The Gypsies had been traveling around Europe, spreading the name that designated them, and that they most probably used in contacts with people outside their own community. This was most probably also the case when the first Gypsies arrived in Poland: the term was used to refer to the community they belonged to, and in all certainty it did not have pejorative connotations.

So the first known record about the sojourn in Poland of the people known today as Roma is the one mentioned above, referring to Mikołaj Cygan. It is necessary to explain here two significant issues. The 19th century works sometimes mention a document by Duke Bolesław the Chaste (*Bolesław Wstydlivy*) from 1256, a fragment of which could refer to the Gypsies: “and newcomers who commonly

are called ‘shanties’ are relieved from conscription service.”⁵ The first Polish scholar on Gypsies, Czacki believed this to be a reference to the Gypsies (Czacki 1800, t. I, 238). The author of a later treatise, Narbutt already stated affirmatively that the document referred to Gypsies (Narbutt 1830, 36–37). The opinion of Narbutt was adopted by some foreign authors, who mentioned the year 1256 as the date of arrival of the Gypsies in their works (e.g., Serboianu 1930, 27). Even a later extensive study by Czacki, in which after analyzing the document, the author concluded that the term referred to fair vendors, has not changed this erroneous conviction (Czacki 1845, t. III, 299).

Some works (especially earlier ones) devoted to the history of Gypsies, including non-Polish Gypsies, also claim that the oldest trace of Gypsies’ presence in Poland is the name of the village Czigunowycze. Klich, a well-known scholar, claims that the information about the village of Czigunowycze that belonged to the Clarisses Convent in the parish of Stary Sącz, comes from 1357 (Klich 1931, 181). Klich relied on the *Akta grodzkie i ziemskie* (AGZ, t. IV, 1873, 1–5). However, when we actually analyze the cited *Akta grodzkie i ziemskie*, the case starts to look completely different. The document that Klich refers to is not the 14th century original, but is a confirmation drawn up some 200 years later that cites only parts of the original privilege. The original was issued in Stary Sącz on April 28, 1357. On the basis of this act, Konstancja, the Duchess of Głógów, and at the time Mother Superior of the Clarisses Convent in Stary Sącz, granted privileges to the townsmen of Stary Sącz, and defined their duties to the Convent. The name “Czigunowycze” is not mentioned in the text of the original document cited in the later confirmation act. The full original text of the Duchess Konstancja’s privilege is not known today; the text of the original is known only from the confirmation of the privilege document, issued in 1559. This 16th-century document starts with customary official formulations, and then the text of the original 1357 document is cited. Thus, the name of “Czigunowycze” appears only in the 16th-century confirmation formulations, and refers to the village that was property of the Clarisses Convent. In the original document cited

⁵ Translated from Latin: “et advenae qui vulgariter Szalassi Vocantur a servitute exacionis liberantur.”

in this confirmation act, there is no mention of “Czigunowycze,” so, in all certainty, the mentioned name does not appear in the original 14th-century document, but only in the 16th-century confirmation of the privilege. And at that point, the Gypsies had been known in Poland for quite a long time, about one and a half centuries. “Czigunowycze” is mentioned by Długosz, a medieval scholar, who some authors refer to (Długosz, t. I, 1863, 551; t. II, 1864, 236; t. III, 1864, 339). The work that referred to “Czigunowycze” was a list of church beneficiaries in Lesser Poland (Małopolska), entitled *Liber beneficiorum dioecesis Cracoviensis*, and was written in 1470–1480. This means that in 1470, Czigunowycze had already existed, but it is hard to say for how long. *Słownik historyczno–geograficzny województwa krakowskiego w średniowieczu* does not mention the existence of this village before Długosz’s record (*Słownik... krakowskiego*, 1985, 427–428).

The first definitive mention of Gypsies that was cited at the beginning of this chapter—the paragraph about Mikołaj Cygan—was an entry in the city council books of Kazimierz, today a district of Kraków, and at the time a separate city located close to Wawel, the hill where the Royal Castle was built. The text of the record informs us that Cygan paid a tax of half a *grzywna*, most probably on the leased land, since he was living at the time, as one could infer, in Kazimierz Zapłocie. Mikołaj Cygan was not a nomad who had just arrived in Kazimierz. Paying the tax—especially since the payment was made in late autumn, on November 9, just before the arrival of winter—confirms that Mikołaj led a settled life. The volume containing this record about Mikołaj Cygan (*Acta consul. Casimir. k. IV, 548; DOC. 1*) is located in Kraków (APK III).

We do not know for certain where Mikołaj had come from earlier, yet we can assume that he had travelled from the south, Hungary, or from the southwest, Czechia. At the time the border of the Polish Kingdom ran just about several dozen kilometers to the west from Kraków, close to Oświęcim, where lay the Silesian Duchy under the House of Luxemburg and the Czech Kingdom. It is more probable that Mikołaj came from Hungary; names of people and locales related to the Gypsies appear in Hungarian archival documents already at the end of the 14th century (Horváthová 1964, 36). There is also reliable information from Rožmberk in the south of the Czech

Kingdom, from 1399, about a servant named Cygan (Davidová 1995, 14). Yet, Mikołaj Cygan probably came to the Polish lands along the road from Hungary, or at least this direction is more likely. The Hungarian Gypsies who travelled in the direction of the Czech Kingdom and Prague usually travelled to the west and onwards to the countries of the Holy Roman Empire, according to existing documents.

The great majority of the earliest information about the Gypsies, dating from the 15th century, comes from Kraków, Lwów⁶, and places along the road, connecting these two important cities. More surprising is the fact that the *Pyzdry*⁷ *Land Books* contain an entry of a village, close to Unisław, named Cyganowo (which no longer exists) from the year 1404. On January 15 of the same year, the following entry was made: “Bronisz from Broniszewice has a court hearing in two weeks’ time with Wolfard and Dersław from Unisław, regarding the inheritance of Cyganowo.”⁸ Court hearings usually took place every two weeks, and the entry tells us that a case of an inheritance dispute regarding Cyganowo had been lodged, the court hearing was set in two weeks’ time, and in the case of non-attendance the defendant would likely lose the case by default (*Terr. Pysdr.*, Nr 1, f. 148v). The Cyganowo case appears again several years later, where it is mentioned in the *Pyzdry Land Books* in 1449. On May 13, the following entry was made in the *Pyzdry Land Books*: “The borders between Wielowieś on the one side and with Jan and his brother from Unisław and the Czyganowo manorial estate on the other”⁹ (*Terr. Pysdr.*, Nr 10, f. 444). This second entry corroborates the previous one, and shows that it was not just a mistake or an error while transcribing. We also learn more or less where the non-existent today Cyganowo was located. With the help of the *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego*, we can

⁶ Today’s Lviv in Ukraine, in Latin Leopolis, also known as Lemberg. With regard to the historical context addressed in this book, all locations will appear with their Polish names—with the exception of Vilnius.

⁷ Pyzdry is a city about 60 km to the southeast of Poznań.

⁸ Translated from Latin: “Bronissius de Bronissewicz habet terminum peremptorium cum Volphardo et Derszlao de Vneslaw pro hereditate dicta Ciganowo per duas septimanas.”

⁹ Translated from Latin: “Wyelawyesz ab una et Johannem et fratrem ipsius de Unyeslawycze et allodium Czyganowo partibus ab altera.”

establish the location of the mentioned places, which was about 90 km to the north of Wrocław, close to the road to Poznań (about 130 km to the southwest of Poznań) (*Słownik geograficzny...*, t. XII, 1892, 808). Not far away from this area, the road connecting two very important urban and religious centers of Poland crossed, one going from Silesia through Wrocław to Poznań and Gniezno, and the other being the road from Kalisz and central Poland to the west. Since the Gypsies came from the south, such an early record from the distant Unisław is rather surprising, especially since the name Cyganowo was mentioned in the beginning of 1404 and the manorial must have received its name even before that. It is impossible to establish today whether the existence of Cyganowo was the result of the migration of the Gypsies from Hungary and Slovakia, or rather from the Czech Kingdom and Silesia—both variants are probable here. We can be more certain that Cyganowo was not established due to the migration from the west, because most probably the Gypsies were as yet not present in the German lands.

Four years after the entry in the Kazimierz income and expenditure books, in April 1405, the income and expenditure books of the city of Lwów made a record of a tax payment made by one Piotr Cygan. If he paid the tax in April, he must have been settled there at the beginning of the year or even earlier. This Piotr Cygan was a well-off person; his property was located in the very town centre, just next to the market square. “The tax established on Easter day of 1405 (April 19) for buying the Dobrzyń land¹⁰ [—] The third side of the market [—] paid by Piotr Cygan,”¹¹ reads the earliest entry regarding Piotr Cygan in the Lwów books (*[Leopol.] Percepta et expisita civitatis*, 1404–1414, 55). The income and expenditure register of 1404–1414 (part of the collection of acts of the Lwów municipality), mentioned tax payments by Piotr Cygan several times. Just after St. Bartholomew’s day of the next year (that is, August 25, 1406) Piotr Cygan paid his next

¹⁰ The Dobrzyń Land was a territory located on the bank of the Vistula river, to the south of Toruń. It was the property of the local monastery, pledged to the Teutonic Order by the end of the 14th century and regained by Poland in 1405.

¹¹ Translated from Latin: “Exaccio instituta in festis Pascalis m^occcc^o quinto pro redimenda Terra Dobrynensi. [—] Circuli tertia pars [—] Petir Czigan solvit.”

tax (*ibid.*, 131). In 1408 Piotr moved to a different estate, according to the entry from December 1408: “The second quarter of the market square [---] paid by Piotr Cygan”¹² (*ibid.*, 213). The next entry was made on May 18, 1410 (*ibid.*, 265). We do not know Piotr Cygan’s occupation, but possibly it was trade. It is clear, however, that he lived in the market square, which would indicate considerable affluence and social status. Later Piotr also bought a plot of land outside the city: “Piotr Cygan bought a garden in front of the Galician Gate from Jan Breytsuch and by that law himself resigned. This took place on the very day of Dominic, 1411 [August 5]”¹³ (*ibid.*, 218). Two more entries in this register (from 1411 and 1413) mention Piotr Cygan.

The next volume of income and expenditures of the city for 1414–1426 contains several more entries about tax payments by Piotr Cygan. The entry from March 12, 1414, reads: “The tax established during the Great Lent on the very day of St. Gregory [---] in the year of our Lord one thousand four hundred fourteen (March 12) [---] the third part of the market square [---] was paid by Piotr Cygan”¹⁴ (*[Leopol.] Inventarium proventuum*, 1414–1426, 29). The Lwów acts contain three more entries referring to Piotr Cygan; the last entry was made on May 11, 1417. Piotr Cygan lived for 14 years in the most convenient spot in the city, the market square. We do not know if Piotr Cygan was granted civic rights—that was not an easy matter because of the requirement to meet a number of criteria (more on this later)—as no relevant entry in the Lwów registers is known. However, it is very likely, and I even believe it would be strange if he had not received civic rights after living for such a long time at the Lwów market square.

We do know, however, for certain that at the time when Piotr Cygan was living in Lwów, one Jan Cygan was granted civic rights in Kraków. We find the following entry in the civic rights register: “Fellow citizens of the year 1411 [---] Jan Cygan has civic rights, he

¹² Translated from Latin: “Circuli secundum quartale [---] Petrus Czigan solvit.”

¹³ Translated from Latin: “Petrus Czigan emit ortum ante portam Halicensem apud Iohannem Breytsuch et eo iure solus resignavit. Actum ipso die dominici m^occcc^oxi^{mo}.”

¹⁴ Translated from Latin: “Exaccio est instituta in quadragesima ipso die Sancti Gregorii [---] de anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo quarto decimo [---] tertia opars circuli [---] Petir Czegan solvit.”

had the letter”¹⁵ (*Lib. iur. civil. civit. Crac.*, k. I, 61). Being a citizen of Kraków guaranteed considerable benefits, including the right to trade and the protection of the city authorities, and protection even outside the country. The city of Kraków was granted a range of freedoms and privileges and being a citizen gave one the opportunity to use these privileges; therefore, persons applying for civic rights had to meet several criteria. The sons of the citizens were in the best situation (civic rights were hereditary, so they did not have to apply for them), but foreigners found themselves in a much more difficult situation. The fundamental obligatory condition was possession of a relevant document, a recommendation letter. On the basis of the testimony of witnesses, the city council members from the home place of the newcomer issued a “*littera, testimonium, genealogia*,” stamped with the city seal. Such a document contained information about the legitimacy of birth, names of the parents, place of birth, good conduct, and unrestricted departure from the city (where the letter of recommendation was issued). Legitimate birth, good conduct, and Catholic faith were fundamental requirements; without meeting them, one could not be granted civic rights in Kraków. As we learn from the entry, Jan Cygan presented such a letter. We do not know who issued him the document, or where he came from, but possibly from one of the Hungarian cities. Other conditions for receiving civic rights were permanent residence in Kraków, possession of a wife and home, and payment of the required fee, depending on one’s occupation (Kaczmarczyk 1913, x–xix).

From 1432, in lieu of cash payment, citizens were required to deliver a piece of armament, as arms were collected to defend the city. An entry recording this case was made in the Kraków acts. The second book of these acts contains the following entry: “Citizens of the year of our Lord, 1436 [---] Mikołaj alias Michno Cygan has civic rights and the letter and has given 13 groszes for a crossbow {and for one *ferton* given to Stanisław, Matys vouched}”¹⁶ (*Lib. iur. civil. civit. Crac.*, k. II, 66; DOC. 2).

¹⁵ Translated from Latin: “Concives de anno M^oCCCCXI^{mo} [---] Jan Czigan habet ius civile habuit litteram.”

¹⁶ Translated from Latin: “Cives anno domini MCCCC^o tricessimo sexto [---] Nicolaus alias Michno Czigan habet ius civile et litteram et dedit XIII gr. super balistam {et pro i fert. ad Stanislaw dando fideiussit Mathis}.”

Civic rights were not the only privilege enjoyed by the Gypsies in the early history of Gypsies in Poland. In the Kraków city register, “*Cygan cubicularius*” is mentioned among notables and court officials of the king. The information regarding Cygan (Gypsy) was entered on September 20, 1418, and is related to a court action. The relevant fragment tells us: “Świder, *wójt*¹⁷ of Koszyce sued Cygan, the royal chamberlain, at the court of the first instance”¹⁸ (*Castr. Crac.* t. I, 32; DOC. 3). Fedorowicz explains that “*cubicularius*” means royal chamberlain in the royal acts (1898, 247). This means that Cygan performed an office closely connected to the king himself: he was a chamberlain, and thus had access to the royal bedchambers and the opportunity to be close to the king. Thus, he must have been a trusted person.

The existing registers of Kazimierz mention a person named Cygan eight times between 1416 and 1419. Only the last entry includes a mention of a Christian name, Andrzej. The records discussed here present exceptionally interesting and valuable information with regard to the first Gypsies in Poland about their status, financial position, and prestige. The *Acta et Regestra* of Kazimierz from 1416–1431 contain “*nota expensa* for the royal carriage transport,” a register of sums of money spent from the city budget for carriage rental, following from the duty of providing services to the royal court in Wawel. The register contains the following entry: “In the year of our Lord 1416. Carriages [---] next to Bochnia on Saturday, on the eve of [St] Peter in Fetters, by Klemens and Cygan with two horses carrying silver plates and spices, 16 groszes”¹⁹ (*Acta consul. Casimir.*, k.. II, 14v). The next year, in the late autumn, within the space of four days the following items were sent on November 9: “to Wieliczka, cheese by Cygan [---] with two horses”; and on November 13: “to Bochnia with the royal gown by Cygan with two horses, on Saturday after the feast of St. Marcin”²⁰ (*ibid.*, 15). This Cygan must have been a trustworthy

¹⁷ *Wójt* was a head of town (under the overlordship of the owner or the king).

¹⁸ Translated from Latin: “Świder advocatus de Koszicze contumax in primo termino contra Cygan cubicularium regium.

¹⁹ Translated from Latin: “Anno domini M^oCCCC^oXVI^o. Podwody [---] Item ad Bochnam sabbato in vigilia Petri ad vincula per Clementonem et Cziganum cum duobus equia argentea vasa et species aromaticas ducentibus XVI gr.”

²⁰ Translated from Polish: “do Wieliczki przez Cygana sery [---] w dwa konie”; „do Bochni z szatą króla przez Cygana, w dwa konie, w sobotę najbliższą po święcie Marcina.”

and reliable person if his services were used for transporting goods, including valuable ones, for several years. The very fact that he provided services to the royal court, and that the Kazimierz municipality recommended or appointed him for those missions, proves that he was a trusted person and not some pauper (who could have been tempted to steal some goods). In 1418, Cygan transported royal court belongings twice. In the next year, on March 22, “to Wieliczka on the Wednesday after [the day of St.] Benedict, in the year of our Lord 1419, by Cygan with one horse the royal gown and coat”²¹ were sent. On April 25, he was sent with two horses to Wieliczka, carrying a letter from the King, and on May 17, “on the Sunday after the day of St. Sofia letters from the queen to the king [*were brought*] by Cygan with two horses to Wieliczka”²² (*ibid.*, p. 56v). His services were not performed free of charge; the Kazimierz municipality paid Cygan, and he must also have been a reliable person whose trustworthiness raised no doubts. Indeed, a person who was employed to carry royal letters, correspondence between Queen Elżbieta and King Władysław Jagiełło, must have been a trusted and deserving person.

We know little about the history of the Gypsies in Poland, especially during this earlier period. Yet, even on the basis of the documents discussed above one can claim that the image of the Gypsies in those times does not match at all the one that we know from the 18th and 19th century documents. The Gypsies encountered in these older documents are not homeless people, vagrants, merry and musical thieves, and rustlers. It is possible that among the Gypsies—residents of Kazimierz, Kraków or Lwów—there were some poor wanderers; yet, if they had been a more numerous group that was standing out from the rest, there would have been records of them in the registers of those days, just as there are such records in the documents from the following centuries. Yet, the image based on the entries presented here does not fit popular opinion, and probably calls for a closer verification of our knowledge about the earliest history of the Gypsies, not only in Poland, but in Europe as well.

²¹ Translated from Polish: “do Wieliczki w środę najbliższą po [dniu świętego] Benedykta, Roku Pańskiego 1419, przez Cygana z szatą króla i płaszczem w jednego konia.”

²² Translated from Polish: “w niedzielę najbliższą po święcie Zofii przez Cygana z listami królowej do króla, w 2 konie do Wieliczki.”

The assumption that the 1401 record mentioning Mikołaj Cygan (similarly to the other entries discussed in this chapter) refers to a member of the ethnic Gypsy-Roma community, may raise objections among some historians, especially among those who do not know the history of this group in Europe. We encounter here a certain mental calque, the stereotype that nomadism was a necessary condition for being recognized as a Gypsy. However, during those times the use of terms such as *Ormianin* (Armenian), *Rusin* (Ruthenian) or *Tatar* (Tartar) next to a person's given name were designations of their origin, and there is no reason to believe that this rule did not apply to Gypsies, simply because they were nomads. Stereotypical thinking makes it difficult for us to imagine a Gypsy living among citizens—residents of old Kazimierz, Kraków, or Lwów. Making decisions with regard to who was who, and who belonged to what ethnic group was a typical feature of 19th-century science. The Gypsies were pigeon-holed on many occasions and in many different ways. A scholar, traveler, or chronicler made his own decision with regard to who was who on the basis of his knowledge and a catalogue of stereotypical cultural features attributed to different groups. In our times, such an approach towards classification has proved to be prone to failure and has often led to wrong conclusions. For a long time now, a person's self-identification and self-presentation has been considered a significant element of the indication of one's ethnic belonging. I cannot find any logical justification or scientific grounds for assuming that this applies only to contemporary times and not to the past. The stereotypes limiting our thinking may cause one to refuse to recognize Mikołaj Cygan, and others similar to him, as a person who really was related to Gypsies, and understood as an ethnos. I would also like to add that in other contemporary publications, scholars who study the history of Gypsies in various European countries treat entries such as the ones mentioned above as records referring to ethnic Gypsies (e.g., Mujić 1953, 144 and beyond; Soulis 1961, 152–153; Horváthová 1964, 36; Vukanović 1983, 23 and beyond).

A wealth of interesting information about Gypsies from the south of Poland, from the towns and villages between Kraków and Lwów, can be found in documents dating from the 30 years following the abovementioned 1401 record. From these documents we can infer that

the first newcomers—a Gypsy vanguard of sorts—settled in the cities and were wealthy enough to buy a plot of land or a mansion. They were also well-oriented with regard to the ways society functioned in those days, the legal rules, etc. Later arrivals settled in villages and small towns, and also did not fit the profile of vagrants or nomads, as demonstrated in the case of Piotr, called Cygan, mentioned in 1420 in the register of Trześniów, a village situated between Brzozów and Rymanów, about 25 km to the northeast of Sanok (*Xięga grom. Trześniów*, 7).

Interesting evidence with regard to Gypsies can be found in the Sanok²³ register of land acts of 1423–1462. There are about a dozen or so relevant entries, the most intriguing of which mentions Mikołaj Cygan, referred to as “*pallatinus sanocensis*” (the *voivode*²⁴ of Sanok). This office was held by Mikołaj Cygan, during the period between September 20, 1427, and March 20, 1428. The majority of entries refer to court sessions, as Mikołaj Cygan was one of the members of the jury: “The land court on Saturday, on the eve of St. Matthew the Evangelist, by Cygan the voivode and Mikołaj, the Sanok judge...”²⁵ A more detailed entry that also tells us the name of the Gypsy-voivode was made a week later, on September 27, 1427: “The land court on Saturday on the very day of St. Stanisław [---] in the year of our Lord 1427 [---] we, Mikołaj Cygan, the Sanok voivode, Mikołaj, the Sanok judge, declare...”²⁶ The case examined by the court dealt with an unpaid debt, for which the injured party sued the debtor and guarantors (*Terr. Sanoc. 1423–1462*, 63–64). Mikołaj Cygan settled disputes twice more in 1427. He also took part in court hearings in January and February, and twice in March of 1428 (*ibid.*, 65–66, 70–71; *DOC.* 4).

The office held by Cygan was not, as it appears, a great honour. But the fact of holding an office and passing legal judgements in cases of

²³ Sanok is a city now in the southeast of Poland.

²⁴ *Voivode*: a governor of a *voivodship* (a large territorial unit).

²⁵ Translated from Latin: “Iudicium terrestre sabbato in vigilia Mathee ewangeliste per Cygan Woyewodam et Nicolaum Iudicem Sanocensem.”

²⁶ Translated from Polish: “Sąd ziemski sprawowany w sobotę, w sam dzień świętego Stanisława [---] roku Narodzenia Pańskiego 1427 [---] Mikołaj Cygan wojewoda sanocki, Mikołaj sędzia sanocki oznajmujemy.”

disputes or complaints shows that Mikołaj Cygan was not a peasant, and most probably had been raised to the nobility, since later entries of the Sanok land registers and municipal acts mention his belonging to the nobility. An entry from February 1430, tells us that “nobleman Paweł Jasiński with his brother have agreed that they will give their sister, the wife of Cygan, 30 *grzywnia* of coal towards her dowry”²⁷ (ibid., 109). An entry from May 19, 1431, referring to the dowry states explicitly: “The court hearing held on the eve of Pentecost [---] Paweł and Dobiesław, brothers from Jasionka, testified that they owe to noble Cygan, their brother-in-law, twenty *grzywna* as the dowry for their sister [---]. Also Jan Jasiński came and testified before us that he owes Cygan one third of twenty *grzywnas*, also as the dowry for his sister” (ibid., 137–139). Three years later, the case of the dowry and the debt of the Jasiński brothers to Cygan were taken to the Sanok court again. According to an entry from February 13, 1434:

The nobleman Jan Jasiński by his own good and free will and in sound mind testified that he owes seven *grzywnas* less eight *skojce*²⁸ towards his sister’s dowry and to honor this and according to the custom of the land he should give seventeen *skojce* [---] on settled peasants to noble Cygan, his brother-in-law, and he will keep them from the coming Christmas to the next Christmas, until the mentioned Jan repays [his debt] and he will collect from every mentioned person the payment from the mentioned money. And then appeared noble Paweł Jasiński, their brother, who testified that he owes 10 *grzywnas* to noble Mikołaj Cygan under the same conditions as Dobiesław who testified as below. Next having appeared, as above, the noble Dobiesław Jasiński who testified that he owes to noble Mikołaj Cygan, his brother-in-law, ten *grzywnas* towards the dowry, out of which he should give one *grzywna* on settled peasants on the same conditions as it has been written with regard to Jan, to keep from Christmas

²⁷ Translated from Polish: “szlachetny Paweł Jasiński z bratem swoim ugodzili się, że dadzą swojej siostrze, małżonce Cygana 30 grzywien względem posagu.”

²⁸ A *skojec* is a unit of payment worth two *groszes*.

until Christmas according to the custom of the land and the mentioned Dobiesław should collect the mentioned payment from every person²⁹ (*ibid.*, 171).

Thanks to this entry we can without doubt claim that Cygan, the brother-in-law of the Jasieńskis, was a nobleman and was named Mikołaj. We learn more about him from an entry from the end of the same year, December 18, 1434, regarding the pawning by Cygan of his peasants: “having come in person, the noble Mikołaj Cygan from Swyrczów of his free will testified that he has pawned the peasants in Zmiennica that he holds as a security of his wife’s dowry”³⁰ (*ibid.*, 184–185). The Mikołaj Cygan, mentioned here, is probably the same person who was the Sanok voivode in 1427–1428, and who was mentioned in the *Sanok Land Books* with respect to the court hearings.

A peasant named Cygan is mentioned in the Sanok records of land acts in an entry from January 7, 1430, which mentions him in the context of a dispute over land (*Terr. Sanoc. 1423–1462*, 106). The next entry, made more than a month later, on February 11th, refers clearly to Cygan, a peasant of lord Matiasz from Boiska (the village of Zboiska, situated about 10 km to the southwest of Sanok was probably the village in question). According to this record, “conciliatory

²⁹ Translated from Polish: “szlachetny Jan Jasieński z dobrej myśli, zdrowego rozumu, nieprzymuszony zeznał, że winien jest względem posagu swojej siostry siedem grzywien mniej osiem skojców i z tych dać winien według zwyczaju ziemi siedemnaście skojców [---] na kmieciach osiadłych, szlachetnemu Cyganowi swojemu szwagrowi i powinien trzymać ich od Narodzenia Chrystusa przyszłego aż do następnego Narodzenia Chrystusa, dopóki jemu nie wypłaci rzeczony Jan i powinien ściągać od każdej osoby rzeczoną zapłatę z pieniędzy rzeczonych. I przyszedłszy, szlachetny Paweł Jasieński brat ich tak zeznał, że jest winien 10 grzywien szlachetnemu Mikołajowi Cyganowi pod takim warunkiem, jak Dobiesław zeznał, jak niżej. Dalej przyszedłszy, tak jak wyżej, szlachetny Dobiesław Jasieński zeznał, że jest winien szlachetnemu Mikołajowi Cyganowi szwagrowi swojemu względem posagu dziesięć grzywien, z których jemu dać powinien jedną grzywnę na kmieciach osiadłych pod takim warunkiem, jak wyżej napisane jest o Janie, trzymać od Narodzenia Chrystusa aż do Narodzenia Chrystusa według sposobu ziemi i rzeczony Dobiesław winien ściągać rzeczoną zapłatę od każdej osoby.”

³⁰ Translated from Polish: “przyszedłszy osobiście, szlachetny Mikołaj Cygan z Swyrczowa nieprzymuszony zeznał dobrowolnie, że zastawił kmieciów w Zmiennicy, których ma w zastawie względem posagu swojej żony.”

arbitration between the valiant lord Matiasz on the one side and lord Andrzej, the gunsmith on the other, concluded that Miklosz, lord Andrzej's peasant, should give 9 *grzywna* to lord Matiasz's peasant Cygan.³¹ The Sanok land register gives us a bit more information about this Cygan (*Castr. Sanoc.*, 1435–1462, 13). According to an entry from November 17, 1435, Queen Zofia relieved from payments the townsmen of “the Queen's city Tyrawa, injured as a result of fire accident,”³² for three years. One Jakub Cygan is on that list. Later, the Sanok acts mention a Cygan three times. In his work on the relations between the various nationalities in the Sanok region, Dąbkowski claims: “A few Gypsies also came from Hungary to the Sanok region. The Sanok records contain a few more details about one of them, Jakub Cygan, the favorite peasant of the old lord Matiasza from Boiska, who had probably come with him from Hungary. This Jakub Cygan settled later in Tyrawa, where he had his own house. When part of the city burnt down in the fire of 1435, Cygan was relieved from taxes together with other victims of the fire for three years. He had a son named Jan Cygan”³³ (Dąbkowski 1921, 21–22).

Cygans are mentioned several more times in sources originating from this part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, i.e., the localities situated to the east of Sanok. On August 27, 1445, a complaint by noble Voschen against noble Szadurka, accusing him of stealing a horse, arms, and other items, was entered into the Lwów municipality acts. According to that entry, „Mikołaj will have to present [—] witnesses of nobility. The first one Mikołaj Niger the judge from Kamień, Piotr Próchnicki, Hleb from Boratyn, Szczepanowski, Jan Cygański,

³¹ Translated from Polish: “przyjacielskie rozjemstwo zgody między mężnym panem Matiaszem z jednej i panem Andrzejem puszkarzem z drugiej strony, tak że Miklosz kmieć pana Andrzeja powininien dać 9 grzywien kmieciowi Cyganowi pana Matiasza.”

³² Translated from Polish: “miasta królowej, Tyrawy, którzy przez występек ognia są poszkodowani.”

³³ Translated from Polish: “Z Węgier przybyli do Ziemi Sanockiej także nieliczni Cyganie. O jednym z nich, Jakubie Cyganie, który był ulubionym kmieciem starego pana Matiasza z Boisk i który być może razem z nim przybył z Węgier, zawierają zapiski sanockie nieco więcej szczegółów. Ten to Jakub Cygan osiadł potem w Tyrawie, gdzie miał swój dom. Kiedy część miasta spłonęła w r. 1435, uzyskał Cygan wraz i innymi pogorzalcami zwolnienie od podatków na lat trzy. Miał on syna Jana Cygana.”

Stanisław Kutkowski”³⁴ (*Castr. Leop.* 1441–1446, 483–484). This entry unequivocally shows that Jan Cygański was classified as a nobleman.

The next piece of information refers to the village of Laskowce on the Zbrucz river at the estuary of the Dniester river. It is likely that one of the figures listed in the document is the same nobleman Jan Cygański mentioned in relation to the complaint lodged by Mikołaj Voschen with regard to the robbery. The document issued in Laskowce refers to the partitioning of the village of Hussakowce (situated in the neighborhood of Laskowce) between two sisters, Anna and Stachna. The partitioning was performed in Laskowce on March 27, 1448, by Janusz from Orinin, a land court official of Kamieniec, on the basis of royal authorization in the presence of witnesses: “noble Zygmunt from Nowosielce, Jan from Boryskowicze, Mikołaj Podolec from Nowosielce, Borszcz from Kociny, Jan Cygański from Boryskowicze, Piotr Cygański from Wojtkowice, Jan Kniehnicki...”³⁵ (*OSSO: manuscript 572*). The contents of this document leave no shadow of a doubt that both, Jan and Piotr were classified as noblemen; they also must have been considered legitimate since they were chosen as witnesses in such an important case as land partition.

The next important entry comes also from the Lwów acts. Noble Jan Cheliński lodged a complaint to the Lwów court against Jan Cygan on April 6, 1448, “for two armours and one gown that the above mentioned owes to him”³⁶ (*[Leopol.] Resignationes 1441–1448, 416*). Cheliński attempted in this way to change the verdict of the Kamieniec court, where this case had been previously heard. Jan Cygan quoted the verdict of that court, and then the Lwów court referred to the court in Kamieniec. On the basis of that non-guilty verdict, it also issued a non-guilty verdict to Cygan. From the letter from the Kamieniec court we learn that Jan Cygan was a Sandomierz townsman. If in

³⁴ Translated from Polish: “Mikołaj świadków szlachtę [—] przedstawić będzie powinien. Pierwszy Mikołaj Nigier sędzia kamieński, Piotr Próchnicki, Hleb z Boratyna, Szczepanowski, Jan Cygański, Stanisław Kutkowski.”

³⁵ Translated from Polish: “szlachetnych Zygmunta z Nowosielc, Jana z Boryskowicz, Mikołaja Podolca z Nowosielc, Borszcza z Kocin, Jana Cygańskiego z Boryskowicz, Piotra Cygańskiego z Wojtkowic, Jana Kniehnickiego.”

³⁶ Translated from Polish: “o dwa pancerze i jedną szatę, które pomieniony jemu ma być winien.”

1448, Jan Cygan was a citizen of Sandomierz, a large and important city of the Commonwealth, he must have arrived there long before. He also must have had property and lived there for some time before he was granted civic rights. Hence, most probably he arrived there no later than by the end of the 1430s. What we learn from this is that although the majority of Gypsies were staying in the southern part of the country, they were present not only in the territories directly bordering with Hungary, but were also moving in the direction of central Poland. The entries in the Pyzdry land acts and the entries from the *Metryka Księstwa Mazowieckiego* (Mazovia Duchy Metrica) provide further evidence of this.

The name of the citizen of Sandomierz, Jan Cygan, resurfaces once more in documents two years later. An entry from March 1450 in the Kraków land books, refers to a dispute between noblemen: “Andrys Edlinger from Warsaw, Jan Cygan, *wójt* from Sandomierz”³⁷ and councilors. The matter of the dispute is not clear, but it appears to have been about the division of competencies. The councilors presented the privilege issued by King Casimir the Great to the court and the court ruled in favor of them (*Terr. Crac.*, t. 151, 49). There is no certainty as to whether both entries—from the Lwów and Kraków registers—refer to the same person, yet this is very likely taking into account the short period of time between the two entries and the same name. In a matter of just two years, Jan Cygan, a citizen of Sandomierz, became a *wójt*. The rank of *wójt* was an office of considerable prestige, so Jan Cygan must have been an eminent person in Sandomierz with regard to status and property. This is another piece of evidence that the first Gypsy newcomers were people of considerable means and were considered respected persons early upon their arrival in Poland. They also must have been arriving equipped with the necessary recommendation letters from the relevant municipal authorities (probably Hungarian ones), possessed property, which made settlement in big cities easier, and were sometimes granted offices and privileges as well. The last war has sadly impoverished the archival resources in Poland and the Sandomierz acts were burnt in

³⁷ Translated from Polish: “Andrysem Edlingerem z Warszawy, Janem Cyganem, *wójtem* z Sandomierza.”

a fire together with other documents; hence, no further information about the *wójt* of Sandomierz Jan Cygan is available.

The entries regarding Jan Cygan, citizen of Sandomierz, as well as the records from Mazovia, a region in central Poland, from 1427 provide evidence of the assumption that soon after arriving in the towns of southern Poland, Gypsies moved towards the north to central Poland and points further. Even if the Cygan who gave the name to the settlement in the Pyzdry region had been a pioneer in penetrating the Commonwealth lands, others followed in his steps soon enough. Our knowledge is incomplete, and a number of books are still waiting in archives for a systematic analysis. Yet, many questions will always remain unanswered: the war damages and the changing borders following the war have made finding all the answers fairly impossible.

The *Metryka Księstwa Mazowieckiego* contains an entry made on October 27, 1427, in Zakroczym (about 40 km to the northwest of Warsaw): "Piotr, Świętosław and Jan called Cygan, from Bonkowice" sold land owned by them in Bonkowice "for one hundred and fifty *kopas*³⁸ of common *groszes*"³⁹ (*Metr. Kor.*, t. 333, k. 77v). The transaction was concluded in the presence of Janusz I, the Duke of Mazovia. Cygan appears in the *Crown Metrica*... one more time in this century. This is an important record referring to a situation with regard to the Gypsies so far not known in Poland. This entry was made on October 11, 1497, in a field camp near Suczawa in Moldavia, during King John Albert's unfortunate expedition that ended in defeat. The text is not clear. It refers to granting property as a reward to those who reported to the wartime mobilization of armed forces. Stanisław Cygan of Dacic is mentioned among other surnames of noblemen from the Mława and Bielsk *powiats* in central Poland (*Metr. Kor.* t. XVI, 106). We do not know what the occupation of the still non-numerous Gypsy population in central Poland was. On the basis of the records discussed here, one can assume they cultivated land, whereas settlements in

³⁸ A *kopa* was a monetary unit in coin form.

³⁹ Translated from Latin: "Petrus, Swanthoslaus et Johannes dictus Czigan de Banco-wicze."

cities, such as Sandomierz, might indicate trade and craft as the basis of their existence.

When Gypsies arrived to the Polish Kingdom from the south, and later moved to central Poland, Silesia was not yet part of the Commonwealth. Little is known about Gypsies in Silesia. Incomplete knowledge on this issue results mainly from limited archival research. However, since Silesia was probably one of the countries from where Gypsies arrived in Poland, and moreover, since the *Sejm*⁴⁰ took up the issue of Gypsies for the first time due to conflicts in the borderlands with Silesia—resulting in the adoption of first legal acts directed against the Gypsies—I believe that we need to focus our attention on this neighborhood a bit. Here, I will rely on previously published information, albeit not verified, without referring to archival resources (mostly because research might have taken precious time from this work, which is not directly devoted to Silesia).

The Silesia acts from the 1430s mention the von Kitlitz family, later barons, who had common ancestors with the von Zygans (also called Czigans) who used the same coat of arms. According to the 18th-century work that I rely on here, the change of name of one member of the von Kitlitz family (from whom the Zygans originated) was related to the struggle for the Czech crown. In 1458 Matthias Corvinus, the son of János Hunyadi, was put on the Hungarian throne. Soon after that, a dispute over the Czech throne started between this king and Emperor Frederick III, which lasted for several years. During the war, the armies of Matthias Corvinus occupied Moravia and a considerable part of Silesia (Wereszycki 1986, 48). Probably there were Gypsies serving in the army of Matthias Corvinus under the command of one of the Kitlitzes. Then “they changed their family name because one of the family who had been in the service of Matthias, King of Hungary, with the help of the Gypsies, who made up two regiments in the royal army, distinguished himself so much that the king told him in his grace: help again, Cygan [Gypsy]. Jan Jerzy Cygan baron von Słupsk also originated from this glorious family, which was elevated

⁴⁰ The Parliament of the Polish Kingdom, and after 1569, of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

by Emperor Rudolf to barony. He died at his estate in Sacraw, in Upper Silesia on January 6, 1640”⁴¹ (Sinapius 1720, t. I, 1086).

Słupsk was indeed the residency of the family that was nicknamed Cygan. Even though they were not barons at the time, they must have been people of considerable prestige and position, as we can indirectly learn from the following records from Słupsk. On May 21, 1496, Magdalena and Mikulas, Duchess and Duke of Opole, Opawa and Racibórz⁴² issued a document with regard to the use of water “that flows in the Łuków lakes.”⁴³ Jan Czigan from Słupsk is mentioned as one of the witnesses (*Codex dipl. Siles.*, 1857, 214–215).

It is difficult to form a clear opinion about the presence of Gypsies in Silesia, and the relations of the von Zygans, Jan Jerzy Cygan, Baron von Słupsk and Jan Czigan from Słupska with the contemporary Roma population on the basis of these limited pieces of information. This relation appears to be limited to the story presented by Sinapius. It is also likely that Gypsies took part in the war against the Emperor in the Hungarian army of Matthias Corvinus.

The geographical distribution of the oldest records regarding Gypsies suggests that the cities of south and southeastern Poland were the places of their initial arrival. A comparison of dates suggests that Kraków was the first city where they settled. They moved from there to the east, to Sanok, and in the direction of Lwów. It is also possible that some arrived via the Łópków Pass, directly to the lands of Sanok and Lwów. There, we encounter the largest number of traces of Gypsies. It is also possible that Gypsies arrived in Lwów, not from Hungary, but from Vlachia through Moldavia, which bordered Poland and was Poland’s fief. However, there is more evidence

⁴¹ Translated from German: “Sie hätten aber nachmahls solchen Nahmen darumb verändert, weil einer von dieser Familie der unter Könige Matthia in Ungarn umb U. 1460. in Kriegs-Diensten gestanden, durch Hülffe der Cziganer, deren 2. Regimenter bey der Königl. Armee gewesen, sich dergestalt signalisiret, dasz ihm der König gnädig zugesprochen: Adesdum Zigane! Von diesem Preiswürdigen Geschlechte, so vom Kayser Rudolpho II. in Freyherrlichen Stand gesetzt worden, stammte her Joh. George Czigan, Freyherr t. Schlupska [---] Starb auf Seinem Gute zu Sacraw in Ober-Schlesien 6. Jan. 1640.”

⁴² Towns in Silesia: Opole, Opawa, Racibórz.

⁴³ Translated from Polish: “która ciecze ze stawów łukowskich.”

indicating that they were arriving from Hungary, and their status in Poland is one such indicator. From what we know from the oldest records, Gypsies in the Romanian lands were in a much worse situation (even including slavery) and were certainly poorer.

All 15th-century source records from the territories of Poland refer to individual people calling themselves Gypsies. No document from that period referring to Gypsies as an ethnic group is known. The second half of the 15th century marks a period of notable decrease in the migration of Gypsies to Poland. There were considerably more records of their presence in Poland at the beginning of that century. Later, even if they were coming from the south, this was a rarer phenomenon, which may indicate that the western direction became more attractive and they more often moved towards Western Europe.

The turn of the century did not bring any change in this situation, even though in the neighboring countries there had already been conflicts between Gypsies and the local population for several decades. In the majority of Central and Western European countries, the first Gypsies arriving from the second decade of the 15th century were coming in groups. There, we do not observe a situation similar to the one in Poland: Gypsies arriving in Poland were rather well adopted to the local conditions, culture, and way of life, and due to that, did not arouse such interest as the wandering Gypsies living in tents and wearing clothes different from that of the local population (at least that is what we can assume on the basis of the existing information). The character of these groups, including their organization, gave rise to many future conflicts. The way they were described in the earliest documents does not reflect any hostility or aggression, but rather curiosity about them. Yet, the period when the newcomers were seen as God-abiding pilgrims was passing, and the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance brought a rather fundamental re-evaluation. Attitudes towards Gypsies, as well as towards other wanderers were changing and we witness a shift in focus towards people who avoided work, did not pay taxes, people who were suspicious and living at the expense of others. These opinions were the result of the perceptions of the non-Gypsy population, and their consequences were very significant for Gypsies. Archival sources do not indicate that the reason for the change in attitudes

towards Gypsies was some fundamental change in their behavior and way of life. The second half of the 15th century was a sort of borderline, and from then on we see signals of the changing attitudes towards Gypsies. Direct evidence of these changes was the legal acts issued by the authorities of various countries and of different levels, including rulers, municipal and church authorities.

The legal acts and the attitudes towards Gypsies in many countries didn't only affect the development of settled Gypsy communities. This was also a period of the formation of the specific Gypsy ethos that gave their life, culture and social organization a certain refugee character, that of a group and culture at constant threat, on the move and in conflict with the mainstream population.

The last decade of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century—the period of the reign of Emperor Maximilian I and his attempts to strengthen the homogeneity of the Holy Roman Empire, including the sphere of state and administration—resulted in the adoption of a series of legal acts directed against Gypsies. First of all, they were ordered to leave the territory of the Empire and sometimes forced to settle. Later acts introduced harsher punishments for continuing to lead the lifestyle of being on the move, and thus avoiding subordination to any local authorities or paying taxes, as well as living in closed groups. As a result of these policies, many Gypsies looked for more favorable conditions. Some of them, in order to escape repression in the Holy Roman Empire, headed east, to the territories where such legal solutions were not yet known, and there was no increase in hostility towards them. The western direction was not a good choice, as the legislation there was similar to that of the German lands. As a result, they started to arrive in the Commonwealth. It is worth noting that their arrival in the Commonwealth is also indirect evidence of their knowledge of geography and the political and legal situation in different European countries, as well as an indication that different Gypsy groups were in contact with one another, shared information as well as documents, and used their copies or specimens for forgery.

Thus, the turn of the century did not mark a change in the situation of Gypsies living in the Polish Kingdom, although it was also the period of the arrival of Gypsy refugees from the Holy Roman

Empire. Historical sources do not note their arrival immediately, and in general, we have little information about the arrival of wanderers. We can conclude that they had started to arrive from the fact that 16th-century sources begin to mention wandering, and not only settled people (as had been the case in the first half of the 15th century). Also we find Gypsies associated with occupations known to us from Western European chronicles, but not mentioned earlier in the Polish documents. Also, for the first time we encounter the terms “Egyptians” or “Philistines from Egypt Minor” being used to refer to wanderers in the Polish sources. The 15th-century arrivals who were not wandering had been referred to exclusively as Gypsies (*Cyganie*).

Two more records deserve some discussion and commentary. Chronologically, they belong to the 16th century, yet those to whom these documents refer must have already arrived in the 15th century. These records are not related to the Gypsy migration from the west, but for the first time they refer to Gypsies as a group, and not as individuals. Both records originate from earlier publications about Gypsies. One is about Polgar, a Gypsy leader, mentioned by Czacki, and the other is about Wasyl, also a Gypsy leader, mentioned by Narbutt. Both concern the year 1501, although it seems that nobody, other than the authors, had seen the documents discussed in the two publications. Thus, this situation calls for considerable precaution, especially since the second document, mentioned also by Narbutt, appears to be a forgery.

On his treatise “*O Cyganach*” (On the Gypsies) Czacki cites a fragment of a document from 1501: “*Cum nobis expositum fuit quod Polgarus Wojewoda Cyganorum cum suis hominibus in nostris terris existens etc*” (Czacki 1845, t. III, 299). The reference to this citation indicates that this information was found by Czacki in the *Metryka Koronna* (*The Crown Metrica*). The *Metryka Koronna* is located in Warsaw at the AGAD, yet the *Metryka* collection does not contain any volume or fragment relevant to the entry cited by Czacki. It is not clear where Czacki found this entry and from which acts he copied it, as Czacki’s information about the source is incomplete.

It is a pity that Czacki treated such an important document so casually. The cited fragment appears to be the beginning of a record:

“When we were informed that Polgar, the voivode of the Gypsies with their people staying in our lands...”⁴⁴ Several years earlier, in 1496, King Vladislaus II Jagiellon of Hungary gave a letter of protection to voivode Tomasz Polgar; Polgar was the leader of a group of Gypsies consisting of 25 tents, who were black-smiths making armor for the bishop of city of Pecz (Grellmann 1787, 80; Pittard 1932, 34). Since we know about Tomasz Polgar, it is an even greater pity that Czacki did not say anything more about this fragment.

The second fragment is a document attributed to King Alexander I and published by Narbutt. For a long time it was believed that this was the oldest known document referring to wandering Gypsies in Poland, and to be more precise, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It is an introductory letter written in Ruthenian and signed by Alexander: “We, Alexander, by God’s grace King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania [---] Wasyl, the senior *wójt* with his Gypsies paid tribute to us and implored our majesty [---] we give our letter, and having confirmed and appointed him, Wasyl, the Gypsy *wójt*, we grant him the authority and right to judge Gypsies, settle all disputes between them [---] and he and his Gypsies will have the freedom of movement on all our territories, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and its fiefs, and their freedom is granted and permitted by this letter according to old laws, customs and duke letters [---] Written in Vilnius, in 1501, in the month of May, the 25th”⁴⁵ (Narbutt 1830, 171–172).

The sentence about Wasyl’s request that Alexander granted the right to free movement on the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and the reference to Alexander’s ancestors, who had granted such a right, might indicate that Gypsies possessed such

⁴⁴ Translated from Polish: “Kiedy doniesiono nam, że Polgar, wojewoda Cyganów, ze swoimi ludźmi, w ziemiach naszych przebywający...”

⁴⁵ Translated from Polish: “My Alexandr bożeju miłostiu Korol polski Wieliki Kniaz litowski [---] Bił nam czołom Wasiliy starszy Woyt i Cyhany jeho i prosił maestatu naszoho [---] nasz list dajem a jeho Wasila Woyda Cyhanskoho izbrannoho potwierdziwszy i ustanowiwszy nadajem jemu moc i prawo Cyhanow suditi wszelakije między nimi spory rozsużati [---] a on i Cyhany jeho po wsich zemlach naszych Welikoho Kniazestwa litowskoho i jeho lenostiach mieti majut swobodu i obrasczanie, a swoboda ich wodłuh dawnych praw obyczajow i listow kniaźych darowana i dozwolona nami jest sim listem naszym [---] Pisan u Wilni w leto 1501 mesiacu maja w 25 deń.”

document that was supposed to convince Alexander to grant them the letter. This instance also gave rise to the conviction, recurrent in the later literature (but not supported by source materials), that the rulers before Alexander took care of Gypsies and granted them introductory letters. Yet, as mentioned above, there are some reservations with regard to this document. The most fundamental one is about its authenticity. The letter is known exclusively from Narbutt's publication. Narbutt wrote that he had copied the letter from documents belonging to the heirs of the Zenowicz family, as well as that it was a record from the land books of the Troki voivodeship⁴⁶ made on February 12, 1590, whereas the entry into the Troki books was made on the basis of earlier records from the land books of the Lida *powiat*⁴⁷ from August 21, 1568 (Narbutt 1830, 170).

Unfortunately, it is impossible to confirm the information about the entries from the Lida and Troki books. When Narbutt's work was published in 1830, the historical archive in Vilnius did not yet exist. It was created twenty years later, in 1851. According to the so-called *Sprogis Inventory*, the catalogue of acts of the former Vilnius Archive, the Lida books started from 1662, and the Troki land books from 1661 (Sprogis 1929, 202, 233). Only one book of the Troki acts contains earlier documents. These are the "*Rejestrzy Sądowe z lat 1569–1722*" (Court Registers from 1569–1722); however, they also do not contain any information about the entry in question to the Lida books or the letter for Wasyl (*Trocki Ziem. Sąd*, LVIA: F. SA, Nr 6210). At present, the Lida land court acts are kept at the historical archive in Minsk (NGAB: F. 1767, op. 1), but the earliest record in them is from 1620. It is possible that the earlier Lida and Troki books were destroyed, as there were all too many events in history that could have precipitated their loss.

Several elements, with regard to the document published by Narbutt, give further cause for reservations. The text of the privilege itself starts with the following sentence: "We, Alexander, by God's grace King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania," and ends with: "Written in Vilnius, in 1501, in the month of May, the 25th." At that point in time, however, Alexander I was not the King of Poland, he

⁴⁶ Troki is a city in the southwest of present Lithuania.

⁴⁷ Lida is a city in the northwest of present Belarus.

was only the Grand Duke of Lithuania. John Albert, Alexander's predecessor, died on June 17, 1501, in Toruń, during the preparations for an expedition against the Teutonic Knights. Information about his death could not have reached Vilnius sooner than within several days, but that also did not make his coronation obvious. Alexander was not the only candidate to the crown and the selection of the new king did not take place immediately. Alexander was crowned on December 12, 1501. So how is it possible that Alexander used the title of King of Poland in this privilege, when the previous king was still alive, and despite his sickness was strong enough to prepare to go to war? This does not seem possible.

Hence, the document cited by Narbutt is most likely a forgery, prepared upon the request of one of the Gypsy groups, possibly by Wasyl, the Gypsy leader, himself. The person who performed this request might not have known exactly when John Albert died, and when Alexander became the king, especially if he was performing this order after Alexander's death, in 1506. This seems all the more likely since according to Norbutt, the document was registered in the Lida books in 1568. It is also possible that the clerk registering the document was careless and made a mistake in the date (although this is a weak argument for the authenticity of the letter). Without settling the matter in a definitive way, we should point out that the authenticity of this privilege by Alexander I for the Gypsy *wójt* Wasyl raises serious reservations, and that most likely the document is a forgery. However, this does not mean that the letter did not perform the role of an authentic document, making the life and wandering of the group considerably easier. The society's low level of education and knowledge of history could well have made it possible for the Gypsies to use this document without being exposed. What is striking, however, is that no scholar of Gypsy history, even among contemporary researchers, has paid any attention to such important details, as the inconsistency with regard to the dates and events.

The records by Czacki about Polgar and by Narbutt about Wasyl, close the first period of the history of Gypsies in the Commonwealth. After the earlier arrival of individual persons or families, wandering groups started to arrive. They did not settle as the previous arrivals had done. Polgar—if the authenticity of this figure can be

confirmed—was the leader of one such group. Wandering groups started to arrive from the first decade of the 16th century, probably escaping unfavorable conditions in the countries of Western Europe. Also groups of wanderers started to appear from the south.

We do not know when the first Gypsies arrived in the eastern territories of the Commonwealth, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The documents from the second half of the 16th century indicate, that at that point, there were already two categories of Gypsies in the Lituanian and Ruthenian lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The first group consisted of settled Gypsies, living with families or small groups in the cities and on the properties of landed nobility, employed as servants or earning their living from trade and craft. The second group comprised wandering Gypsies, who appeared at fairs and markets. Representatives of the first group could have arrived to these lands as early as during the 15th century, travelling from the south, from the Lwów region (albeit there are no archival records confirming this). The second group could have also come from the south, from Moldavia, but more likely had travelled from the west and from the Polish territories.

To sum up and emphasize the most important issues discussed in this chapter, and to draw attention to this predominantly unknown period of the history of Gypsies in Poland, consider the following concluding points.

- 1) The frequency of the names of locales in the southern part of the Polish Kingdom in source material related to the Gypsies indicates rather clearly that Gypsies were arriving from the south, from Hungary (and Slovakia, which then belonged to Hungary). It is possible that some of them arrived from Vlachia through Moldavia, then a fief of Poland, and that individual Gypsies also arrived from Silesia. However, their prosperity, wealth, and status lead us to the conclusion that the majority came from Hungary, and not from Vlachia.
- 2) Despite the widespread opinion—recurrent also in the specialized literature—that the Gypsies were poor wanderers, refugees running away from repressions, the earliest records paint a rather different picture. Within these earliest records, we do not find

any information at all that they were a poor group living on the margins of society. The fact that we encounter Gypsies who had been granted civic rights, held offices (albeit not very prestigious ones), married representatives of the nobility, were members of court juries, took part in settling disputes and property divisions, served at the royal court, and lived in the most prestigious parts of the city, indicates that they were respected and wealthy people. Even those who lived in villages or were peasants were not paupers. All of these facts also indirectly support the assumption that they came from Hungary.

- 3) Within a short period of time Gypsies had arrived in different cities of the south of Poland in considerable numbers, and this was not just an individual phenomenon. One of the great unknowns in the history of the Gypsies, is the motive that pushed them across the Carpathian Mountains towards Poland. We know neither why they headed towards Europe, nor why they left the Balkans, moving towards the center of the continent. Similarly, we do not know the reasons why they moved to the north, crossed the Carpathians, and started to settle in Poland at the turn of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century. Economic reasons do not seem to be the only motivation; it is possible that the threat from Turkey also influenced their migration to Poland.
- 4) The lack of information from the western and central regions, Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) and Mazovia (after the initial traces of their presence there in 1404 in the region of Unisław and in 1427 in Mazovia, the documents do not mention them for several decades anywhere else but in the south of Poland) gives us grounds to claim that practically there were no Gypsies in those regions, and that they did not move towards the north and east of the Commonwealth.
- 5) We do not know much about the economic behavior of the earliest Gypsy newcomers. The fact that they lived in cities and serviced carriages may indicate their engagement in trade; it is very likely that there were also craftsmen among them. Several records with regard to Gypsy peasants and Gypsy owners of landed property, clearly demonstrate that among those earliest arrivals there also were people who were engaged in cultivating land and the rural economy.

- 6) What has been presented here does not only fundamentally change our perceptions and knowledge of the history of Gypsies in Poland, but it also poses questions with regard to their earlier history, the history from before their arrival to Poland. Only systematic research can provide the answers. Yet, even the scant source materials from Poland allow us to assume that the history of Gypsies in Europe is much richer than we realize today, and that it is likely that their history here in Europe, especially in Eastern Europe, is much older than we recognize.
- 7) The oldest records discussed here only tell us that someone called *Cygan* came to and lived in a certain village or city. These oldest documents do not give us any information as to whether they spoke any different Gypsy language, or whether their behavior was different from the local cultural patterns. On the contrary, the documents seem to indicate that their way of life, occupation, religion, and value system—all apart from their name—were not any different from those of the local non-Gypsies. I believe that it is rather improbable that the designation “*Cygan*” could have referred to anyone other than an ethnic Gypsy (in the contemporary understanding of the term). In the Polish language there is no other meaning for the word “*Cygan*,” whereas the existence of the same, or similar word in the Greek and Balkan languages, as well as in the Hungarian, Romanian, and other languages, is always used as a designation of the community, or people often referred to today as Roma. It is also interesting that even in the oldest records (from 1401, 1405, and later ones), this word is very similar to its contemporary form. It is probably the closest to the Hungarian version, while in Romanian it sounds different. The 1401 document refers to “*Micolay Czigan*,” which looks and sounds almost identical to the Polish word. I believe this can be also seen as evidence that the Gypsies were coming to Poland predominantly from Hungary.

All of the oldest records refer to individuals, although we can assume that those mentioned by their name also had families (wives and children). Yet, not a single time in the oldest 15th-century documents do we find any information that would indicate that they

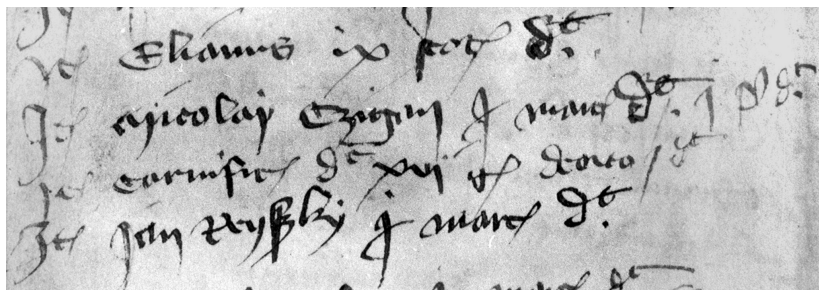
were part of a larger group. Also, there is no indication that there were any connections between the individual Gypsies mentioned in the documents. One's own language, culture and customs are the factors that are usually considered in the social sciences as important elements of the sense of belonging to a certain group or community. We do not find any such information in the discussed documents. This gives the impression that we are dealing with a group at the stage of social and cultural disintegration, one that was undergoing the processes of breakdown, and advanced assimilation. It appears that after the period of the initial formation of the Gypsy community, based on early migrants from India, a part of them underwent considerable change under the influence of the local non-Gypsy communities, adopting the local ways of life, culture, and values, more so than the rest. With time this led to assimilation, whereas the designation of ethnic origin adopted as a name became one of the few traces of the past. The process of the adoption of the ways of local non-Gypsy communities must have taken place after the formation of the Gypsy community; otherwise, they would not have used the common designation "Cygan."

Those earliest newcomers possessed not only property and recommendation letters, but also knowledge of the circumstances and values to which they also aspired. They were considerably assimilated people. They defined themselves as Gypsies, but apart from the name did not preserve much of their ethnic and cultural distinguishing features (at least we do not find evidence of that in the documents). With time, as we can assume, they "dissolved" in the surrounding local community and were absorbed by it. It is likely that persons having family names deriving from the word "Cygan" are descendants of those early assimilated Gypsies. Thus, those earliest Gypsies who came in the 15th century, especially in its first half, were individuals coming from an already disintegrated community, a collection of individuals who here in Poland did not create a community, but underwent full assimilation. Only the later, 16th-century groups of newcomers preserved (at least partially) their character of a community different from the local population, with regard to their language, culture, organization, and a sense of being different.

I realize that relating the documents presented above with ethnic Gypsies may be met with suspicion or protest on the part of some historians and medievalists. That is why I have tried to explain in these concluding remarks what may be the relation between the different characters referred to as “Cygan”, “Cyganski,” or other variations of the word, and the Gypsies understood as a specific ethnic group. I believe that it is a sort of mental conformism and the stereotypical association of Gypsies with nomadism, combined with a limited knowledge of the works on the history of Gypsies, that may lead to such reservations. The available information allows us to claim that from the mid-14th century, the word “Cygan” referred to both, wanderers living in shanties (mainly in Vlachia and Byzantium), as well as to persons living in cities, engaged in trade or craft and belonging to the rather well-off stratum of society (in Nafplio, Dubrovnik, Zagreb as well as in Hungarian cities). As we can assume, the latter ones’ lifestyle was not different from that of local non-Gypsies. However, the word “Egyptians” that was also sometimes used alongside the word “Cygan” clearly indicates the affinity of these terms, and thus the affinity between the people referred to in the documents with the Gypsies as an ethnos (see Mujić 1953, 144; Vukanović 1983, 23).

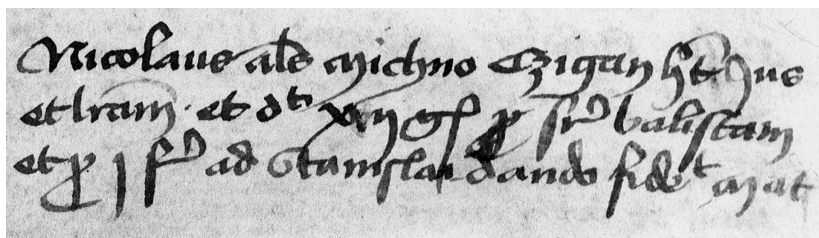
Let us also consider this issue from a contemporary perspective. Today, there are also groups of settled people who earn their living from land cultivation or craft, and who do not use the Gypsy language, yet call themselves Gypsies and are called so by the local community. According to the contemporary principles of social sciences, there are no reasons to question their “Gypsiness.” The definition of belonging to a certain group, or the legitimacy of identification on the basis of conformity to a catalogue of some cultural features arbitrarily believed to be representative, can be recognized as anachronistic. It is assumed that self-evaluation, self-identification, albeit verified by the acceptance of the community, is a more appropriate, more real way of establishing ethnic identification. Why should we discard this approach in the case of the identification of the 15th-century Gypsies? It is only because they do not match our perceptions, common knowledge, and stereotypical image of the Gypsy as a wanderer, musician, and fortune-teller.

DOCUMENTS



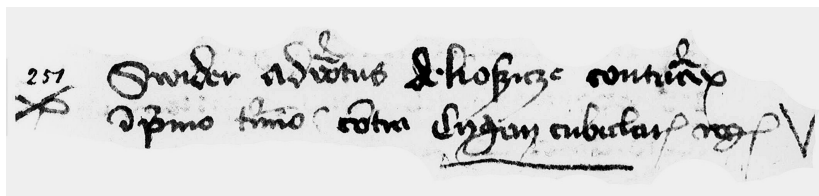
DOC.1 · 1401. The entry in the council records of the city of Kazimierz near Kraków containing information about payment of the rent for Zabłocie [Zapłocie?] by Mikołaj Cygan.

Acta consularia Casimiriensia, 1390–1401, ks. IV, p. 548 [APK (III): sygn. K — 4]



DOC.2 · 1436. The entry in the municipal records of the city of Kraków containing information about granting civic rights to Mikołaj Cygan.

Libri iuris civilis civitatis Cracoviensis, ks. II, p. 66 [APK (III): sygn. 1421]



DOC.3 · 20.09.1418. The entry in the Kraków municipal records containing information on the issuance by the local municipal court of a guilty verdict in the case of Świder, the *wójt* of Koszyce against Cygan, the royal chamberlain.

Castrensia Cracoviensia, t. I, 1418 r. [APK (I)]

1814 881
 Indictum Tresbe celebratum Salto
 primo an Dominicam (Kierstere)
 Cygan pallat Chimaščlonem
 Judicem Sanocem Ezechiel Petru
 Advocatum Sanocem Pella & Jurgio
 Wize Anno unitatis dñi m^o
 m^o xxviii 28/I 1428

6/III 1428
 Terminum Salto primo an Doru
 Douli celebrati Cygan pallat
 & Chimaščlonem Spalidm
 Judicem Salto Sanocem Ezechiel
 Pella familiam Anno unitatis
 dñi m^o m^o xxviii

13/III 1428
 Indictum Tresbe Salto primo an
 Dominicam letan Cygan Wojelboda
 Chimaščlonem Judicem & putatum
 Ezechielm Jurgio Pella &
 Pabedne Pella & Jurgio Wize
 Anno unitatis dñi m^o m^o xxviii

DOC. 4 · 20. 09. 1427–18. 12. 1434. The entries in the Sanok municipal acts containing information about Mikołaj Cygan, the Voivode of Sanok, and his presence at court hearings.

Terrestria Sanocensia, 1423–1462 [IAL: F. 16, o. I, nr I]

Gypsies in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th Century

What the 16th-century records tell us about Gypsies is completely different from conventional perceptions about them. We can see how selective or rather unobjective our insights are, how discriminatory our perceptions of Gypsies are, and how fragmentary our knowledge of their past is. The 16th-century records give us a picture of Gypsies that is nowhere near the image that we are accustomed to.

From almost 60 various records related to Gypsies in the 16th century in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, nearly half comprise a collection of documents referring to Piotr of Rotemberg, a Gypsy leader, who together with his group arrived in Poland, possibly fleeing repressions in the German lands. I will discuss this collection separately in the next chapter.

Among the remaining 34 records, only six refer to groups and not individuals, and not all of these groups were of nomadic habit of life. Nomadic Gypsies arrived in Poland for the first time in the 16th century. They were families or groups who travelled by foot or on horses, living in shacks or tents. Several documents refer to horse dealing by Gypsies; there are also accusations regarding horse stealing, some of which also contain information on collaboration with non-Gypsies, who either acted as accomplices in crimes or benefitted from the stolen loot. Also starting from the 16th century, we find information of Gypsies who were engaged in craft and fortune-telling—professions characteristic for the stereotypical image of Gypsies.

The majority of records, however (apart from the collection of documents regarding Piotr of Rotemberg), refer to settled Gypsies engaged in cultivating land and living individually, as well as a considerable number of Gypsies employed in service at the royal court and landed estates, especially in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania).

The presence of Gypsies among servants testifies to the fact that they were a regular element of the ethnic mosaic of the Grand Duchy, and were not treated as some sort of outlandish and suspicious strangers or vagrants, but rather as a stable community possessing certain skills, mainly related to horse-keeping. Indirectly, this brings us to the conclusion that these Gypsies could not have been nomadic newcomers fleeing repressions from the west, but rather they belonged to the wave of migrants that had been settling in Poland since the beginning of the 15th century.

It is interesting how many of the 16th-century documents referring to Gypsies come from the eastern parts of the Commonwealth; the first bits of information—dating from the thirties and the forties—refer to Gypsies in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

On November 26, 1533, a complaint by one Nekrasz was entered into the municipal books of Połock, a city on the Daugava River in the far away Eastern Borderlands (today in Belarus). The complaint concerned “the Gypsies from Egypt Minor who incurred damages.” Only the introductory formula is in Polish, the rest of the document is in Ruthenian. Nekrasz complains about Miklasz from Egypt Minor and a group of Gypsy women, listed by their names under the authority of Miklasz. According to Nekrasz, “these Gypsy women, during my absence, when I was at the market on Tuesday on the eve of St. Elizabeth’s day, were drinking in my house and jumping around my manor and were doing other strange things. And then twenty *kopas* of *groszes* and two signet rings and other things were gone from my case. All these damages amounted to thirty *kopas* of *groszes*. And he also told of how the money must have flown to the Gypsy women because of all those strange things that took place in his house.”¹ However, as we learn from the subsequent part of the document, “Miklasz, one of those Gypsy women, objected to those accusations, saying that [Nekrasz] should not so hastily bring shame on them and that he

¹ Translated from Polish: “te Cyganki, w czasie mojej nieobecności, bo byłem wówczas na targu, we wtorek, w wigilię świętej Elżbiety, w domu moim piły i w tym czasie pijąc w dworze moim skakali i inne dziwne rzeczy robili. A potem zginęło mi ze skrzynki dwadzieścia kóp groszy i sygnety dwa, i inne rzeczy. Te wszystkie szkody wyniosły trzydzieści kóp groszy. I opowiadał, że te pieniądze miały wylecieć do Cyganek z powodu tych dziwnych rzeczy w jego domu czynionych.”

should first look around and look for the cause among his household servants, as those Gypsy women had been in his house in the morning. His wife gave them mead for one *grosz* and they also bought some more mead for a *grosz* and a half and after drinking the mead they left.”² Nekrasz, however, maintained his accusations, adding that the money was in the chamber in a small case to which only he had the key, and this case was inside another bigger case, the keys to which hung on a nail in the chamber, but the chamber was locked and his wife had the keys to the lock. He also testified that the locks of the bigger case and the chamber were not damaged, and only the lock in the small case was damaged, where the money was hidden. The court, considering that it was impossible that “the money could fly through the chamber wall to the Gypsy women, since the key to the chamber was kept by the wife and the chamber lock remained undamaged, and that the lock of the bigger case inside which the smaller case with the money was kept was not damaged,”³ pronounced the verdict: “we consider in this case Miklasz and his Gypsy women honest and not guilty.”⁴ The judges also advised Nekrasz, the plaintiff, to look among his household members for the perpetrators (*Bel. Arch.* t. 2, 1928, 221–222; DOC. 1).⁵ The judges could not find the Gypsies guilty. We also pass judgments as to whether any of the household

² Translated from Polish: “Miklasz, od tych Cyganek sprzeciwił się, mówiąc, żeby im tak pochopnie nie robił wstydu, i aby dobrze się rozejrzał, a przyczyny szkody szukał między swoją służbą domową, bo te Cyganki w jego domu były rano. Żona jego wtedy za grosz miodu im dała, a oni sami jeszcze za półtora grosza kupili sobie miodu i po wypiciu miodu poszli sobie.”

³ Translated from Polish: “aby pieniądze przez ścianę mogły z komory, ze skrzyni do Cyganek wylecieć, gdyż klucz od komory miała jego żona, a zamek komory nie był naruszony, także w wielkiej skrzyni, w której była ta mała skrzynka z pieniędzmi nie był naruszony; a od tej to skrzyni klucz tamże, w komorze znajdował się, a od skrzynki, w której były pieniądze on sam miał klucz.”

⁴ Translated from Polish: “uznajemy w tej sprawie Miklasza i jego Cyganki uczciwymi i niewinnymi.”

⁵ Unfortunately, the original of this document has not been found. There is a set of Polock books in the Minsk historical archives, but they start with the year 1649 (*NGAB: sygn. F. 1734, o 1*). During the Second World War, the archive was brought to Moscow where a part of the collection was destroyed. It is possible that this included Polock books from the earlier period.

members had stolen from Nekrasz, or whether one of the accused Gypsy women turned out to be skillful enough to retrieve the key from the housewife, open the chamber, then the case, and upon having found no money there, break the lock in the small case, take the money, and then to lock the bigger case and the chamber, and return the key to the housewife unnoticed. Revelry, mead drinking, tricks, and show are associated with the scene that we often find in later and even contemporary descriptions of thefts by Gypsies. What is noteworthy, however, is the description of a numerous and internally hierarchical group, and not just a collection of individuals encountered here for the first time.

The text of the above complaint indirectly tells us that the Gypsies were not fresh newcomers who had arrived unexpectedly. It appears that they were well accustomed with the city and its residents, since when they came to Nekrasz's wife they were welcomed in a friendly way, and not as strangers who should be feared. The Gypsies must have known the local language—Polish or Ruthenian—which means they had arrived to the Commonwealth at an earlier time. The women all had Polish-sounding names, except for one, Aryna, whose name is Ruthenian-sounding. Their leader's name was non-Polish as well. Miklasz is a Hungarian name (Miklós), an equivalent of the Polish Mikołaj, which may be a sign that he came from Hungary. The women adopted names used in Poland, which is not unusual and understandable. In the case of Miklasz, if he possessed any introductory letters or certificates of good conduct issued to that name, he could not have changed it, or his documents would have lost their validity. The text of the verdict by the judges resolving the dispute contains another piece of important information, and namely the lack of the common stereotype regarding the Gypsies, according to which they possess supernatural or devilish powers. The suspects in this case were not pronounced guilty simply because they were Gypsies. The judges acted according to the principle of so-called common sense, rather than prejudice. What is more, it is rather intriguing that the complaint does not contain any information on the nomadic way of life of Gypsies. Miklasz and his group appear to be people who had settled in Połock or nearby for some time, and who were accustomed to the locals. At the same time they were an organized community

under the authority of the elder—leader of the group. According to the document, they were Gypsies from Egypt Minor; this is the first time we find such information in archival sources from the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It is possible that the route of their wandering led from Hungary to Central Europe (the Czech and German lands), and then, after rather short stay there, to the east and to Połock. The information that Miklasz and his group were coming from Egypt Minor must have come from them. Where else would the residents of Połock get such an explanation of the origins of Gypsies, popular already in Western Europe? Also the possession of this piece of information by Miklasz and his groups testifies to their earlier contacts (during their travels) with other Gypsy groups. The above entry is one of the oldest traces of Gypsies in this distant part of Europe during that time.

Six years later, on September 15, 1539, a complaint by one Lord Mikityn about a Gypsy, who had taken his horse and was keeping it, was entered into the municipal books of the city of Grodno (*Akty...*, t. XVII, 1890, 41–42).⁶ This entry starts a new chapter in the history of Gypsies: from this moment on, Gypsies appear in the sources as servants, especially on the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. We cannot be sure today whether this Gypsy, or others that we learn about from other records some years later, came with other refugees from Western Europe, and for some reason forsook his wandering habit of life, or perhaps more likely, had come from Hungary and moved to the north (as did the Gypsies who had arrived in the Kraków, Lwów and the Sanok lands a century before). What is noteworthy is the fact that in the earlier documents, from the 15th century, there had not been a single piece of information about Gypsies dealing in or minding horses. They cultivated land, were engaged in trade or craft (as we can assume). Even those who served at the royal court in Wawel, carrying letters or other packages to Wieliczka and Bochnia, don't appear to be associated with trading in horses or their care.

⁶ We were unable to find the original. The Minsk archives do have a collection of the Grodno municipal books (*Grodzenski zemskij sud* [NGAB: *sygn. F. 1755, o 1, e. 1*]), but they begin in 1556. The volume containing the document cited here most likely was lost during the post-war transfer of archives from Vilnius, or was somehow destroyed.

Maybe this implies that those holding various servant positions at manor houses in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were recruited from nomadic groups.

A couple of months later, in the Grodno municipal books there was another mention of Gypsies. On November 1, 1539, an entry was made that "Sawka Mackewicz, Grodno townsman [---] said that [---] in the summer he traded in horses with Gypsies"⁷ (ibid., 51). It clearly implies that there was more than just one Gypsy, since Mackewicz was trading in horses with Gypsies. Maybe there was a group, most likely a wandering one that earned their living from horse trading. This information is presented in a matter-of-fact way that does not require further commentary, implying that the Gypsies must have been known as horse dealers. About a dozen or so years later, on July 13, 1556, a complaint was entered into the same books with regard to a burglary at Mateusz Bystrzyski's manor house. The plaintiff suffered considerable material losses, whereas "Bubbenica, the Gypsy, a horse groom"⁸ was mentioned among his injured servants (*Grodno. zem. sud 1556 r.*, 212–216). A Gypsy named Bubiennica took care of the manor horses. It appears that already in the mid-16th century, horse trading and their care was a Gypsy occupation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; out of the four documents mentioned above, three associate Gypsies with horses.

Jan Cygan was not just a simple servant, but a rather ruthless official entitled with considerable powers at the court of Duke (*kniaź*) Konstanty Wiśniowiecki. In the Słonim⁹ municipal court books, there are six entries concerning Jan Cygan between 1565 and 1566. It appears that he did not merely have the support of the duke, but was probably acting on the duke's orders; otherwise, it would be difficult to explain Cygan's behavior. On November 27, 1565, a complaint was entered into the Słonim municipal books according to which Cygan forcefully entered the estate of Romejkowicz, duke Połubiński's subject, and "took five stacks of hay, which made seventy

⁷ Translated from Polish: "Sawka Mackewicz, mieszczanin grodzieński [---] powiedział [---] że latem frymarczył końmi z Cyganami."

⁸ Translated from Polish: "Cygan Bubbenica, masztalerz."

⁹ Słonim is a city now in western Belarus.

carts.”¹⁰ Confiscating such a huge amount of hay must have taken a lot of time. The motivation appears to be a dispute between the dukes about land, and more precisely about meadows, hence the stealing of haystacks (*Słonim. zem. sud 1565–1566*, 71–71v).

In January 1566 there was another entry made concerning Jan Cygan. The subsequent entry is even more telling. The name of Jan Cygan appeared again in the beginning of March in a complaint regarding the kidnapping of one of Połubiński’s servants by Jan Cygan, who had also deprived him of a receipt for a considerable sum of money and “money in cash in the amount of five *kopas* of Lithuanian *groszes*.”¹¹ (*Słonim. zem. sud 1565–1566*, 105; DOC. 2) By the end of the same month a castle subject appealed to Jan Cygan, the duke’s official, in a petition to administer justice, complaining about a *popadia*¹² who, according to him, “took his hat from him, an innocent man.”¹³

There are two more entries referring to this person in the *Słonim* books. The entries from April 2nd and mid-May are complaints about Cygan who, together with a group of servants of the duke and their assistants, attacked the subjects of another landlord and beat them up (*ibid.*, 122v–123, 146–146v).

These six entries present Jan Cygan as a rather violent person, who at the same time wielded considerable authority, probably due to his office. It is not likely that the appropriation of several dozens of carts of hay, the money, or the forceful actions at the market towards the subjects of another duke, were acts of his own will. Rather, it seems he was a zealous guardian of Duke Wiśniowiecki’s interests. The most vital issue here is, however, the relation of Jan Cygan with the Gypsy-Roma. There is no clue that could help us find the right answers. At the same time, in various documents from different parts of Poland, there are entries referring to persons named “Cygan.” There is no certainty that they always refer to Gypsies, but in most

¹⁰ Translated from Polish: “zabrał siana pięć stogów, a w nich było wozów siedemdziesiąt.”

¹¹ Translated from Polish: “pieniędzy gotowych pięć kóp groszy litewskich.”

¹² *Popadia* is the wife of an Orthodox clergyman.

¹³ Translated from Polish: “czapkę z niego niewinnego zdjęła.”

cases they probably do. Although many years had elapsed since the arrival of the first Gypsies, some source materials point to the fact that apart from refugees from the west, there were also new Gypsies arriving from Moldavia and Hungary. Apart from the descendants of the earliest arrivals, it is they who could have belonged to the group of servants at manor estates, especially in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It is worth mentioning that it is also possible that the name Cygan (and its derivatives) was given to people who were completely assimilated descendants of the earliest arrivals, or that it was given as a nickname to someone with dark hair and a swarthy complexion, all physical attributes associated with Gypsies.

Entries referring to Cygans started to appear in a larger number of documents from different cities, particularly in southern and central Poland (today the territories of eastern Poland) about ten years before the complaints regarding Jan Cygan from the Słonim acts. The entries regarded a variety of matters, including exchanges of lands, the purchase of horses by a settled Gypsy, and craftwork. For the first time, however, the acts also started to mention accusations against Gypsies with regard to stealing, usually of horses, as well as fortune-telling. More significantly, these 16th-century documents provide information about Gypsy groups, presenting us with an opportunity to learn something about this community, its internal affairs, and way of life. All other records refer to persons culturally adapted to the local community, who represent a manifestation of an advanced process of not just cultural assimilation, but also assimilation in terms of identity.

The Metryka Koronna from 1554 contains an entry with regard to concluding a deal between peasants to exchange farmland. One of the parties is Cygan, a royal subject. As the deal concerned royal properties, the agreement was signed by King Sigismund Augustus (*Metr. Koron.*, book 86, k. 206v–207). An entry in the Kraków books from the same period refers to a complaint of Stanisław Cyganek from Brodla village against a nobleman who had beaten him. Apparently, Cyganek reminded the nobleman about payment for sold wood and got beaten up as a result (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 70, 1610). In the Lublin acts we find information about the purchase of a horse by Waśka the Gypsy, who lived in the countryside (*Act. Lublini carcer.*, 1549–1565, 30).

Among all the documents referring to Gypsies, as servants at noblemen's estates, craftsmen or peasants, the most interesting document was issued in 1558, a year after the resolution calling for Gypsies to leave the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and never return, signed by king Sigismund Augustus. The king commands the *żupa*¹⁴ to accept Stanisław Cygan, a royal coachman, who was lame and sick, and ensure that he "as other crippled and sick is provided with appropriate food and dress and to provide for him until the last days of his life" (*OSSO: rękopis no 180/II*, k. 102). As it appears, the *żupnik*'s responsibilities included taking care of those incapable of work, mainly former royal servants. Stanisław Cygan was probably a descendant of those who a century before had served at the royal court in Wawel, transporting goods with their carts.

An entry from 1588 refers to a person named Cygan, giving silver, furs, and arms as security for a loan. Since the loan was not repaid, the person who gave the money refers to the court, asking for permission to sell the goods and thus retrieve his money (*Arch. Radziwiłł. rozd. XXIII*, t. 34, teka 7). The most interesting issue here is the value of the goods, or rather the amount of the received loan: 43 *kopas* of *groszes*, which was a considerable sum of money. For this sum one could buy at least two large farms with tenants, each about 30 hectares. Thus, this Cygan must have been a wealthy person, certainly not a craftsman or minor horse dealer.

Another important document is a record from 1564, made in the inspection books (acts of the archive of the crown treasury) that refers to the village of Dubliany in the Sambor *starosty*.¹⁵ We learn that in Dubliany, there were three Cygans: "one peasant, the mentioned Cygan,"¹⁶ besides him, "there are also two Cygans who do not do anything for the castle, but are engaged in craft and trade, in the traditional Gypsy way, and drive with the *starosta* when there is a need and where they are ordered to. And one of them pays 2 *groszes* of the

¹⁴ *Żupa* was a historical type of administrative division in Poland (as well as other countries in Central and Southern Europe), an equivalent of a "county" or "district." *Żupa* was also a salt mine.

¹⁵ Sambor is a city, now in western Ukraine.

¹⁶ Translated from Polish: "kmięć jeden wymieniony Cygan."

smoke tax and the other pays the smoke tax on his house and the rent for the land and garden, altogether 26 groszes”¹⁷ (*Arch. Skarbu Koron.*, Nr. 131, rozdz. 46, 406). This is the first information about Gypsies earning their living by craftwork; however, the phrase “craft and trade, in the traditional Gypsy way” infers that it must have been a popular occupation among Gypsies. Later in the 17th century, there is more information about Gypsy craftsmen, yet in the 16th century there is little indication in the sources that crafts were one of their main occupations.

In the same year another entry was made into the Kraków books. This was the testimony of a settled Gypsy woman accused of larceny. The accused “Jadwiga Cyganka [the Gypsy woman], the wife of Kasper Ludwik, the Gypsy from Doprzyce [---] testified [---] that [---] that she told fortunes, and took a zloty for each fortune-telling”¹⁸ (*Cas. Act. malef.*, 1548–1610, 66; DOC.3). Dobczyce, where the husband of the accused Jadwiga was from, is mentioned many times in documents referring to Gypsies (mainly in the later ones). It seems that this village, located not far away from Kraków (about 25 km), had been a popular place of their residence over a long period of time. The testimony was forced by torture, yet it does not seem that Jadwiga Cyganka pleaded guilty to something she had not done; so, her testimony regarding fortune-telling, which she must have been doing professionally, seems even more reliable. The last sentence of her testimony is as follows: “she testified that Gypsies earn their living by fortune-telling, stealing and horse dealing,”¹⁹ which confirms that the perception of Gypsies at the time was similar to what we find in the 19th–20th century literature.

¹⁷ Translated from Polish: “tamże jest Cyganów 2 którzy nic nie robią do zamku tylko rzemiosłem i kupiectwem się zwyczajem cygańskim zajmując, i jadą z panem starostą kiedy potrzeba, i gdy im każą. A wszakoż jeden z nich daje, podymnego groszy 2, drugi podymnego z domu i obszaru roli i z ogrodu, daje czynszu spoklonem groszy 26.”

¹⁸ Translated from Polish: “Jadwiga Cyganka Kaspra Ludwika Cygana z Doprzyce żona [---] zeznała [---] iż [---] wróżyła, a od wróżenia brała po złotemu.”

¹⁹ Translated from Polish: “zeznała, iż Cyganie tym się żywią, że wróżą, że kradną, a końmi frymarczą.”

The mid-16th century is probably a *caesura*, starting from which we are faced with a duality of Gypsies' status and the perception of their ethnos. The settled ones lived and worked in a non-Gypsy environment, often married into non-Gypsy families, and were Gypsies only by name. This group also encompassed craftsmen, who lived in settled groups in several families. Whereas those leading a nomadic life, most probably newcomers from the west or the southwestern borderlands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, started to conform to the changes in the mentality of non-Gypsies and to be perceived as alien and criminal. Studies of municipal books registering evidence presented by wrongdoers (the so-called *libri maleficorum*) demonstrate that Gypsies were listed among the tried culprits in the main cities (Kraków, Poznań, and Lublin) only several times (Kamler 1991). It is a negligible number in comparison to the hundreds of non-Gypsies tried. Entries in the acts other than in the books of wrongdoers are also few. The question arises: Where did the conviction about the criminality of the Gypsies and the legislation passed against them by the Sejm come from? The causes must have been independent of legal matters, and they seem to lie not in factual matters, but in the perceptions coming to Poland, together with the tide of new intellectual currents.

The first protocol of a hearing of persons caught stealing dates back to 1554. On February 19th, the following entry was made in the Lublin books: "Marcin Cygan born here in Poland, testified under torture that another Gypsy, deaf and mute, with whom he had recently become associated, steals money from people's purses. He said that he himself did not steal, but only wandered with the above mentioned, and lived off the things stolen by him, and always accepted from him the things taken by the act of stealing"²⁰ (*Act. Lublini carcer.*, 1549–1565, 18). The previously mentioned Jadwiga Cyganka, the wife of Kasper Ludwik, a Gypsy from Dobczyce, put on trial 10 years later under torture pleaded guilty to a number of crimes: "she testified that

²⁰ Translated from Polish: "Marcin Cygan tu w Polsce urodzony, męczony, zeznał że drugi Cygan głuchy i niemy, z którym on niedawno wszedł w towarzystwo, kradnie ludziom pieniądze z sakiewek. Powiedział, że on sam zaś nie kradł, tylko włączył się z nim i z rzeczy przez tamtego ukradzionych żył i zawsze przyjmował od niego część rzeczy z kradzieży zabranych."

[---] she opened and broke a padlock with a master key, which she was keeping in her clothes. After breaking the padlock, she stole a red maiden dress, a *żupan*²¹ and several white kerchiefs. She also testified that near Myślenice she stole a dress from a cart, but later Cygan took the dress away from her. She also stole shoes from a peasant in a village [---] she stole horses, sheep, geese, piglets.”²² In her case we know what sentence was pronounced; at the end of the entry we find the note “hanged” (*obieszona*) (Cas. Act. malef. 1548–1610, 66–67; DOC. 3).

An entry from the last day of August, 1560, also refers to a theft. It tells us about an oath by six Gypsies: “the Philistines listed below [---] that is Mikołaj the elder, Sebastian, Andrzej, Jan, Niklasz, Michał and Jan who with regard to the matters described below was convicted and has been held in the Kraków Castle [---] that they, and the convicted one did not take any of the noble Lasocina’s belongings”²³ (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 80, 445–446). From the text of this entry it follows that Jan, one of the Gypsies mentioned by name, had something to do with the theft, since he was imprisoned; yet, belongings of Lasocina were not found either on him or on any of the other mentioned Gypsy-Philistines, otherwise the case would have taken a different course.

An interesting case was registered in the Mielnik acts of 1576. It is a complaint by the noble Łukasz Wojciechowicz, a Gypsy, about another Gypsy, named Paweł, whom he had recommended for service and who had committed a theft: “this Paweł Cygan having acted in a disrespectable way and having caused great damages to lord Pruszyński, escaped. To cover these damage costs, Łukasz

²¹ *Żupan* was a long, lined garment worn by men of the nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.—Trans.

²² Translated from Polish: “zeznała, iż [---] otworzyła i złamała kłódkę wytrychem, który to wytrych w ubraniu nosiła. Tam zepsuwszy tę kłódkę, ukradła suknię czerwona panieńską, żupan męski i kilka chust białych. Item zeznała iż za Myślenicami ukradła z wozu suknię, ale jej potem Cygan tę suknię wziął. Item ukradła buty chłopu we wsi [---] kradła konie, owce, gęsi, prosięta.”

²³ Translated from Polish: “niżej spisani Filistyni [---] to jest Mikołaj starszy, Sebastian, Andrzej, Jan, Niklasz, Michał i Jan, który względem rzeczy niżej zapisanych jest obwiniony i tu w zamku krakowskim był uwięziony [---] że oni sami i tenże obwiniony nie przyjęli żadnej rzeczy szlachetnej Lasociny.”

Wojciechowicz had to pay forty Polish zlotys to lord Pruszyński. However, when this Paweł was caught with regard to these damages by Łukasz at the market in Łosice in the previous year of 1575, he paid him four Polish *kopas* and gave him his knight's word to pay the rest. But having not paid on the same day and having broken his word, he ran away and has not been seen since"²⁴ (*Akta mieln. grodz.*, Nr I, k. 245v). Was Łukasz Wojciechowicz a real nobleman? Most likely he was an official of the then Podlasie *voivoda*,²⁵ and was titled as "noble" out of respect for his function and because of his master. He recommended another Gypsy, maybe his relative or an acquaintance, who turned out to be undeserving and stole from the person he served. The theft was committed by Paweł Cygan, the one who vouched for him was Łukasz Wojciechowicz, a Gypsy. What brings them together is the fact that they are both Gypsies, what sets them apart is their status and the fact that Łukasz is not denoted only as a Gypsy, but also as the noble Wojciechowicz. A vital issue here is that Wojciechowicz the Gypsy appealed to the municipal court in reference to another Gypsy. We know from another document from the end of the century that Gypsies settled disputes between themselves at their own Gypsy courts. In this case, however, both, or at least Wojciechowicz, appear to be strongly integrated with the non-Gypsy community, and guided by the principles regulating the society, of which Wojciechowicz strongly feels part of. His loyalty to his patron is more significant than that to another Gypsy.

A protocol of the investigation of repeated larceny dates back to 1577, and it is part of the Sanok acts:

²⁴ Translated from Polish: "ten to Paweł Cygan nie statecznie się zachowawszy i szkody wielkie u tego to pana Pruszyńskiego poczyniwszy precz uciekł. Za które szkody ten to Łukasz Wojciechowicz panu Pruszyńskiemu czterdzieści złotych polskich musiał zapłacić, wszakże gdy był przez tegoż to Łukasza ten to Paweł w Łosicach na jarmarku roku przeszłego 1575 przyłapany o te to szkody, i zapłaciwszy kóp cztery polskich, a ostatek się słowem rycerskim jemu podjął zapłacić. Ale zaś tegoż dnia nie zapłaciwszy i słowu swemu zadość nie uczyniwszy, w nocy precz uciekł, i do tego czasu go niema."

²⁵ *Voivoda* was the governor of a province (*voivodeship*).—Trans.

Jan Cygan who initially testified that together with Wojciech Hajduk from Sieniawa he went to Radymno and stole two horses, out of which one was given to lord Marszczyński for keeping, and the other horse is still there, at his pasture, one auburn and the other grey. Later he testified that with another Gypsy, named Koifr, they stole an ox in the Rymanów suburbs and gave it to lord Marszczyński, leaseholder in Sieniawa. Later in Nowosielce they stole two oxen with other Gypsies and gave them to lord Derszniak, who, he said, had told them to steal. Later he testified that they stole two horses from lord Pobidziński, one grey and one red, which are held by other Gypsies who are or live in the Odrzechów Forest, by a stream. Later he testified that from Wola, a village next to Lesko, they stole four horses, of which they gave one to a *decurion*²⁶ from Sieniawa, and the second was sold by this *decurion* to Hungary, the third, a red horse, is at Sieniek's place in Sieniawa. And the fourth horse is held by the Gypsies who live in the forest.²⁷ (*Testam. Furtum Castr. Sanoc.*, t. 448, 106)

This entry gives us a great deal of information. Not only did the Gypsy commit multiple thefts, but also some thefts were committed in collaboration with other Gypsies and non-Gypsies. Jan Cygan appears to be a local man, a resident of the village. He was assisted in his acts of larceny by non-Gypsies, people of low status, as well as local noblemen. This is an important piece of information, since it

²⁶ *Decurion* or *dziesiętnik* in Polish was an official of a lower rank.

²⁷ Translated from Polish: "Jana Cygana, który najpierw zeznał, iż z Wojciechem Hajdukiem z Sieniawy chodzili do Radymna i ukradli dwa konie, z których jednego darowali panu Marszczyńskiemu za to że je przechowywał, i drugi tamże, u niego jest, na pastwisku, jeden ciawy a drugi siwy. Item zeznał iż z drugim Cyganem na imię Koifr ukradli na przedmieściu rymanowskim wołu i dali go temu panu Marszczyńskiemu, arendarzowi w Sieniawie. Item w Nowosielcach ukradli dwa woły z drugimi Cyganami i dali je panu Derszniakowi który powiadał że im kazał ukraść. Item zeznał iż panu Pobidzińskiemu pokradli konie dwa, jeden siwy a drugi rydzy które konie mają drudzy Cyganie którzy są albo mieszkają w lesie odrzechowskim, w potoku jednym. Item zeznał iż w Woli, wsi za Leskiem ukradli cztery konie, z których jednego dali dziesiętnikowi z Sieniawy, a drugiego sprzedał ten dziesiętnik do Węgier, a trzeci rydzy koń jest u Sienka, chłopa w Sieniawie. A czwarty jest między tymi Cyganami, co w lesie mieszkają."

often happened that non-Gypsies, including noblemen, took part in crimes and offences committed by Gypsies. However, all of the blame was put on the Gypsies. The same book also contains a record from 1585 with regard to the theft of several cows by Gypsies.

Both the testimonies of Jadwiga as well as Jan Cygan were extorted by use of torture. This fact needs emphasizing, since we do not know for certain whether they pleaded guilty only to their accused deeds, or were also forced to plead guilty to other acts of larceny known to the judges. All previous information had been about Gypsies living in villages or cities. When wandering Gypsies started to arrive, documents started to note their camps located near forests. It is possible that Gypsies from the forest mentioned by Jan Cygan were wandering Gypsies who came as part of the new wave of migration. If that was the case, it would imply that there were some contacts and some forms of cooperation between different groups, as well as that there were some signs and ways of identification that allowed them to recognize their mutual ethnic identity. Gypsies were storing the stolen loot not only for members of their own group. According to an entry in the Kraków acts of 1561, one Mathus from Dobczyce, a thief, testified that he kept stolen goods with some Gypsies. Here, we encounter a group of Gypsies who had contact with the criminal world: thieves referred to them with regard to storing their loot (*[Crac.] Protoc. causar. crimin.* 1561, 115).

The Kraków acts from 1596 noted the case of a large criminal group of Gypsies. Stanisław Cygan, caught with a stolen horse and tortured during the trial, gave evidence of what and where he and his group had stolen. The group comprised of “three Stanisławs, two Andrzej, Kacper, Florek, Paweł, Szymek.”²⁸ Also, in this case it is clearly mentioned that they were stealing on the instigation of the lord and owner of the village of Skrzydlna, near Kasina Wielka (to the south of Kraków), named Rozen. Rozen sheltered them, for which they gave to him from time to time part of the looted cattle (meat), and they also paid quarterly for the lord’s care with money (*[Crac.] Protoc. causar. crimin.*, 1596, 127). Stanisław Cygan perished as a result of the

²⁸ Translated from Polish: “Stanisławów trzech, Andrzejów dwóch, Kacper, Florek, Paweł, Szymek.”

trial. The thieves mentioned in this document were not a random gathering. They were an integrated group that lived in the village, with their wives and children. This is very different from the image that emerged from the 15th-century documents.

Sometimes Gypsies were unjustly accused, as appears to be the case recorded in the Drohiczyn²⁹ acts from 1583. We learn that Adam Cygan was caught with Noble Knorycki's horse. Without listening to the Gypsy's explanations, he was meant to be taken to the Drohiczyn Castle, most probably for detention. However, this did not happen, as two local people, including the nobleman, the owner of the horse, vouched for Adam Cygan, "an honest man and now as before he has nothing against him"³⁰ (*Akta drohic. grodz.*, seria II, Nr 4, k. 390). If we consider this entry as well as other documents referring to Gypsies as criminals, we can see that horse stealing and horse trading had become a Gypsy specialty in this century.

Closer to the end of the century, the books of Różan,³¹ a city located on the banks of the Narew River in Podlasie, recorded the case of a loan. One Stanisław Ponikiewski pawned to Adam Kuniński "his own settled subject, the hard-working Walenty Cygan sitting on a *półwłoczek*³² in the Kaczka properties [---] with his wife, children and the whole estate, rents, dues, day labor, customary and special duties, receivables all together, to this subject belonging for a long time (except for the tithe)"³³ (*Różan. grodz. wiecz.*, Nr 7, 48–48v). Kuniński will "hold, have and use [the hard-working Walenty Cygan] until the return of the sum of one hundred Polish zlotys"³⁴ (*ibid.*, 48v).

²⁹ Drohiczyn is an old town in eastern Poland (Podlasie).

³⁰ Translated from Polish: "za człowieka uczciwego, jak i poprzednio, nie ma przeciwko niemu nic złego."

³¹ Różan is a town northwest of Warsaw.

³² *Półwłoczek* was a unit of land measure.

³³ Translated from Polish: "poddanego swojego własnego osiadłego, to jest pracownego Walentego Cygana, na półwłóczku w dobrach Kaczka siedzącego [---] z żoną, dziećmi i całym jego majątkiem czynszami, daninami, robociznami dniówkowymi, powinnościami zwyczajnymi i nadzwyczajnymi, przynależnościami i należnościami wszystkimi razem, do tegoż poddanego od dawna przynależnymi (z wyjątkiem dziesięciny)."

³⁴ Translated from Polish: "trzymał, miał i korzystał [---] aż do zwrócenia powyższej sumy stu złotych polskich."

Irrespective of the text of the contract between Ponikiewski and Kuniński, the “object” of the pawning is important for us, namely Walenty Cygan with his family and property. In earlier documents we encounter a Gypsy farmer only once before, in an entry in the Biecz³⁵ acts from 1554 regarding the exchange of land. From the Różan document it is clear that Walenty Cygan was a farmer, he cultivated land, and his duty towards the owner of the property was beyond that of a serf. We can see that Walenty is Gypsy only by his name; maybe he was a descendant of the former newcomers who were noted in earlier documents from this part of the Commonwealth.

By the turn of the 16th century, about thirty years had elapsed since the decision by the Sejm banning providing Gypsies with shelter on private properties. The documents presented above demonstrate that this provision of the legal act was often ignored, or at least it was not often respected. Gypsies were employed as servants, held different functions in private properties, were trade partners, and lived in villages, whereas the owners of those villages derived benefits from their presence.

Information about enforcement proceedings in response to non-compliance with the Sejm rulings, expelling the Gypsies from the country, did not begin to appear regularly in the documents until the next century. However, there was at least some awareness of the regulations with regard to Gypsies and there were cases of court trials of people ignoring the regulation. In mid-August, 1582, an entry was made into the Kraków acts with the heading: “*Arestacio Philisteorum apud Petrum Zebrzydowski*—Arrest of Philistines at Piotr Zebrzydowski’s.”³⁶ We learn from the text of the record that a numerous group of Gypsies stayed for a year in the village of Dołuszyce (now part of the city of Bochnia, located about 40 km to the east of Kraków). Their source of income or habit of life is not known. Such a long stay suggests that they must have rented housing or built relatively permanent shelters enabling them to survive through the winter months. We do not know anything about their affluence, but the entry mentions many servants; besides, if they had been paupers,

³⁵ Biecz is a very old town to the southeast of Kraków.

³⁶ Translated from Polish: “Aresztowanie Filistynów u Piotra Zebrzydowskiego.”

the leaseholder of the village would have most likely roused them out. Since they were able to stay for such a long time, they must have paid for permission to stay, or the leaseholder of the village must have enjoyed some other benefit from their stay. There is no information in the document about any suspicions or other complaints about Gypsies; it appears that the owner of the village was ill-disposed towards them and so submitted a complaint against the leaseholder, demanding their expulsion. The Gypsies were arrested: "The Philistines called Gypsies, five main persons and their children with numerous servants, also staying for a year in the village of Dołuszyce,"³⁷ and the leaseholder were summoned to the court, "with regard to condemning them to banishment"³⁸ (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 127, 301; DOC. 4). We do not know the further course of this case, but most likely the Gypsies were released and ordered to leave the Kraków lands.

There are very few records or documents dating from this century that tell us about the internal affairs of Gypsies. On July 24, 1554, three texts concerning settlements were entered into the Kraków acts, all of them regarding one Gypsy group and their leader. "Paweł Zigarus who is a Philistine or Gypsy forsaking any lands and *powiats*³⁹ and any of his rights, freely testified that he owes to Albert from Rozemberg, a Gypsy, the leader of his group, and to his children five *grzywnas* of money, in Polish coin and number, and together with his children by all his belongings commits to repay it by the nearest Christmas"⁴⁰ (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 70, 1923; DOC. 5).

The formula "forsaking any lands and *powiats* and any of his rights" that appears in this as well as other records, meant that Paweł fully

³⁷ Translated from Polish: "Filstynów zwanych Cyganami, pięć głównych osób i ich dzieci i sługi liczne, tamże we wsi Dołuszyce już od roku przebywających."

³⁸ Translated from Polish: "względem skazania na banicję."

³⁹ *Powiat* is a second-level administrative unit of local government equivalent to a county, district or prefecture.—Trans.

⁴⁰ Translated from Polish: "Paweł Zigarus czyli Filistyn albo Cygan, odstąpiwszy od ziem i powiatów oraz praw swoich jakichkolwiek, swobodnie zeznał, że Albertowi z Rozembergu, Cyganowi, przełożonemu grupy ich i jego potomstwu powinien pięć grzywien pieniędzy, polskiej monety i liczby, na święto Narodzenia Chrystusa blisko przyszłe zapłacić, zobowiązał się z potomstwem swoim na wszystkich dobrach swoich posiadanych."

relied on the law being in force in Kraków and resigned from any rights following from any other laws, including any Gypsy law. One interpretation of this could be that there was some sort of Gypsy Code. The question remains: Why did they refer to a non-Gypsy institution? According to the documents, if Paweł did not repay his debt, Albert had the right to imprison him, make him a slave, the goods owned by Paweł would become property of Albert, and the fate of the debtor would be shared by his children.

The next contract concerns the same Albert and Mikołaj, Paweł's brother. The introductory and concluding formulas are the same, what is different are the names, sums and some details of the contract. Just as in the previous contract, Mikołaj committed to repay the stated sum to Albert or his heirs, and until he returned the whole sum, Albert had the right, after the agreed upon period of time for repayment had elapsed, to hold Mikołaj and his children almost like slaves, until full repayment. Mikołaj also committed that he, "from the above-mentioned Albert will not run away before repaying the above mentioned debt,"⁴¹ for which his brother Paweł also vouched (*ibid.*, 1923).

The third document also contained the same provisions as well as the additional commitment not to leave Albert and his group before satisfying the commitment and repaying the debt. This document concerned two Gypsies who also had debts to Albert (*ibid.*, 1924). Jan and Zachariasz, the two debtors from this third document, also agreed to be held together with their children by Albert, in case they failed to settle the debt on time and until its full repayment.

We do not know the nature of the liabilities of Paweł, Mikołaj, Jan and Zachariasz towards Albert. Yet, it is clear that Albert was the leader of the group and a wealthy person, who at the same time knew how to secure his own interests. Filing the case at the Kraków court gave him the opportunity, in case of non-fulfillment of the agreement by any of his debtors or their escape from justice, to seek help in capturing the fugitives and enforcing their commitments.

⁴¹ Translated from Polish: "od wspomnianego wyżej Alberta nie ucieknę przed zapłaceniem wspomnianego wyżej długu."

The leader of the group, to whom Paweł, Mikołaj, Jan and Zachariasz owed money, is referred to as “Albert Rozemberk,” “Albert from Rozemberk,” or “Albert Cygan from Rozemberk.” In the south of Czechia, there is a city called Rožmberk, and there was a record about a Gypsy member of a criminal gang formed there in 1399. It is likely that Albert and his group came from this particular city. He might also have come from Hungary, or to be precise, from the city of Ružomberok, located about 160 km to the south of Kraków in the territory of Slovakia that had been part of the Hungarian state. The fact that in such important cases as financial ones, the agreements between Gypsies, members of the same community, were confirmed by the authority of the Kraków Court, demonstrates that such solutions were not perceived as threatening to the cohesion of the group. Thus, the Gypsy system of values and patterns of ethnic inter-group behavior were not in disagreement with the behavior depicted in the documents. Those Gypsies must have at least partially adopted the norms and values of the non-Gypsy society, and identified with them to the extent that in order to secure the observance of an agreement between members of their own group, they entered the texts of the documents into municipal books, thus entrusting the fulfillment of the agreements to non-Gypsy jurisdiction.

Of all the 16th-century documents presented in this chapter, the most unique testimony of the history of Gypsies in the Commonwealth is the record of a case from February 8, 1595, registered in the Minsk⁴² books. This significant document proves that the Gypsies had also formed settled communities (in this case probably on the Radziwiłł family’s properties) and settled even serious disputes within their own group, guided by their own laws. Yet they also knew the significance of the official laws and offices, and recognized them, since the decisions of their own court were entered into the Minsk municipal books. Aleksander Matysowicz, a Gypsy, appeared at the *hospodar*⁴³ court at the Minsk Castle and presented

⁴² Minsk is today is the capital of Belarus.

⁴³ *Hospodar* was a Ruthenian term for the duke title in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

to the deputy-starosta⁴⁴ a court letter, written in Polish and stamped with seals, regarding the murder of his wife. The letter was entered, preserving the fidelity of the original writing, into the Minsk acts. From the court letter we learn that on May 20, 1594, in the village of Jarszewice, Aleksander Matysowicz, a Gypsy and a servant of the Vilnius voivode Krzysztof Radziwiłł, filed a complaint: “before all his brother Gypsies [---] against his servant named Kasper Marcinowicz, a Gypsy, that he [---] initiated a great brawl and turmoil, and by his quarrel he excited the common folk in the city of Hain, and they started ringing alarm bells, as a result of which an even greater brawl and tumult occurred, and in this tumult and confusion initiated by Kaspar Marcinowicz, the wife of the above mentioned servant, having been trampled upon and torn, died in less than a week.”⁴⁵

From the following fragment we learn that the assembled Gypsies, upon hearing the complaint, decided to meet and settle the case. This jury declared: “We, having carefully listened to the witnesses and the plaintiff, sentence to the throat the one who had disturbed the common peace and [instigated] people to tumult and because of whom a wife was murdered.”⁴⁶ Because the accused had denied that he committed those acts, the court decided that he must make an oath that he did not commit the crime. He, however, did not show up and so the court decided: “we sentence this Kasper Marcinowicz to the throat according to the judgment and decree of all our brothers. And since our trial was carried out on the property and under the oversight of our lord Jan Zacharewski, at the time being in Jarszewice,

⁴⁴ *Starosta* is a royal official, his deputy was called *podstarości*.—Trans.

⁴⁵ Translated from Polish: “przed panami wszystkimi bracią swoją Cyganami [---] na służbę swego, na imię Kaspra Marcinowicza, Cygana, iż on [---] uczynił burdę i zwadę wielką, którą zwadą swą pobudził pospólstwo w mieście Hainskim, że na gwałt poczęli dzwonić, skąd się tym większa zwada i burda i zamieszanie wszczęło, w którym zamieszaniu i gwałcie od onegoż Kaspra Marcinowicza uczynionym małżonka wzwyż mianowanego sługi jego mości Alexandra Matysowicza będąc starta i zszarpana, niedoczekawszy tygodnia, umarła.”

⁴⁶ Translated from Polish “My tedy wysłuchawszy pilnie świadków i dowodu, jako takowego, który narusza spókoj pospolity i lud do gwałtu i przez którego się stało zamordowanie małżonki jego skazaliśmy na gardło.”

we ask his lordship to attach his seal and sign this by his hand for greater significance”⁴⁷ (*Akty...*, t. XVIII, 1891, 129–130; DOC. 6).⁴⁸

This very important and interesting document tells us about affairs that we usually come across only in the 19th-century literature. The Gypsy Aleksander Matysowicz was a servant of voivoda Krzysztof Radziwiłł, but he also had his own servant, Kasper Marcinkowicz, who was also not a poor farmhand, but a leaseholder. We see that those two Gypsies were not only Gypsies by name, but were members of the local Gypsy community. Generally, little is known about the internal affairs of Gypsy communities, and even less is known about the settlement of internal disputes (on the basis of the 16th–19th-century documents). In this context, the entry into the Minsk acts is a unique document because it demonstrates that a Gypsy court had settled the case before it was entered into the municipal books. The jury investigating the complaint was comprised of Gypsies with Polish-sounding names and surnames. We do not know what their social status or sources of income were, but most likely they were not poor wanderers or horse thieves, but a rather settled people, who might have earned their living by trading. At the same time, these Gypsies must have formed a local community, a well-integrated one, with its own authorities (possibly heads of larger families), and their own court. An oath (even though the document does not provide precise information about its form) remains until even today an important element of settling disputes and seeking the truth within Gypsy communities, and even in present times the faith in its effectiveness is strong, as is the conviction about the punishment to be met by a perjurer. The Gypsy court, seeing that the plaintiff had made an oath and that the accused had evaded it by not showing up on the given date, passed the verdict of guilty. This document indicates the

⁴⁷ Translated from Polish: “tego Kaspra Marcinowicza na gardło skazujemy według sądu i dekretu wszystkich braci naszej. A iż się to prawo nasze toczyło na imieniu a pod bokiem jego mci pana Jana Zacharewskiego, na ten czas w Jarszewicach będącego, prosiłiśmy jego mość dla lepszej wiadomości wszyscy społecznie o przyłożenie pieczęci i o podpis ręki.”

⁴⁸ The Minsk archives contain the collection *Minskij grodzkij sud* (NGAB: sygn. F. 1727, o 1, 5, 6), but the volume with the original documents is missing. The text of the document was published in 1891 in *Akty Izdajemyje Vilenskoju Archeografičeskuju Komissieju*, t. XVIII; I cite it according to this publication.

existence of a special Gypsy Code, a collection of norms, a selection of common law practices, to which the judges or the Gypsy elders referred. Whereas in order to lend more authority to the decision made by the Gypsy court, they asked several non-Gypsy noblemen to certify that the trial was held and a verdict passed. The fact that the name of Gobreiałowicz was mentioned twice, first among the judges and then among the people certifying the act, may indicate that he was an important person, respected by both the Gypsies and, most probably, non-Gypsies. It is likely that he was a Gypsy elder, their leader and an authority recognized by the community.

The discussed document raises many questions. We do not know whether Gypsy courts, like the one depicted here, were a common form of settling disputes and complaints amongst the Gypsies, or whether this was some sort of a local institution, established only on the Radziwiłł's property. The punishment pronounced by the jury was very strict, but we do not know who was supposed to carry it out. Perhaps it was the Gypsies themselves or rather the municipal authorities to whom the culprit would be passed on. Although we also lack knowledge regarding whether the Gypsy court was recognized by local authorities as a form of the observance of law and order, we clearly see that the Minsk municipal court recognized the fact that the dispute was settled by the Gypsy court, and the fellow citizens—the noblemen signing the Gypsy court's verdict—saw it as a conventional matter. The Gypsies themselves clearly realized the significance of entering an internal Gypsy decision into the municipal acts. They probably also knew that such an entry represented the basis for punishing the culprit by the non-Gypsy repression apparatus.

I would like to draw attention to one more thing, the surnames of Gypsies. In 15th-century documents they were called by their first names coupled with an ethnonym "Cygan," or more rarely "Cyganowicz" or "Cygański" (derivatives of Cygan). The documents presented here show that starting from the second half of the 16th century, Gypsies started to use surnames, which clearly demonstrates the advancement of their cultural adaptation, as well as aspirations related to the middle class, minor noblemen and owners of properties in small towns.

When we look at the documents discussed in this chapter, we notice several more intriguing issues. Not a single entry comes from the western or northern parts of the Commonwealth (I omit here the acts related to Piotr of Rotemberg, which I discuss in the next chapter). Within the 34 entries found and predominantly discussed here, eleven come from Kraków, which is the most western locality of their stay in the Commonwealth. Two of these entries refer to Gypsies employed as servants, a Gypsy royal coachman and a forest worker. One entry is about a peasant, and three concern thefts, out of which two refer to Gypsy groups. Information about groups appears four more times, although not in relation to thefts. Another three entries are from places located to the east of Kraków—from Biecz, Sanok and Sambor—and two of these refer to settled peasants and craftsmen. Another two are records of larceny and speak about the thefts of horses and cattle, one of which refers to a group of Gypsies. So all together, we have fifteen documents about Gypsies from the south of the country. Out of them, five concern thefts, five refer to servants, peasants and craftsmen, and in case of the five entries on captured thieves, three concern groups and not individuals.

It is interesting that there is only one trace of the Gypsies' presence in Lwów, and the territories located further to the east, and that the information is sparse from Sanok. This may indicate that Gypsies, so often noted in these regions in the previous century, had underwent the process of assimilation; in the 16th century only their names were a distinguishing feature. Yet, if they did not have a conflict with the law or were not involved in any other disputes, the books did not register their cases, and thus their names were not in the books.

Only the testimonies of captured petty thieves indicate movement and not a settled way of life, although this movement was more related to their occupation. Jadgiwa Cyganka (Gypsy woman) was stealing in the area near Kraków, where she was circulating within a distance of about 30 km. The travelling of Gypsies-thieves recorded in the Sanok book is also of a local nature. The thieving route of Jan Cygan appears to be greater and more diversified. He was stealing in places separated by about 40 km. Yet, in this case, the movement of Jan Cygan was the effect of his way of ensuring income. Only the geographical range of the activities from Gypsies living off of stealing

from Skrzydlana, near Kasina Wielka, was more considerable with a perimeter of about 50 km. These were thieving escapades performed by settled Gypsies and not offences committed by Gypsy nomads.

Out of the records discussed in this chapter, five originate from regions located in the northeast of the country, from the Lublin and Podlasie areas. All of them refer to cases of theft, although in only two cases were the thefts committed by Gypsies. Two of these documents tell us about Gypsies employed as servants and one is about a person settled in the village, possibly a farmer. The source material comes from various locations distant from one another. This situation is different from that of the south of Poland, where we could clearly see that in some regions there were high concentrations of Gypsies. Kraków and its surroundings seem to have been a preferred territory inhabited and visited by Gypsies.

The third area, after Kraków-Sambór and Lublin-Podlasie, where the discussed documents originated, is the western and central part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: from Grodno, via Słonim up to Minsk and Połock (now located on the territory of Belarus). No less than nine entries refer to Grodno and Słonim. Both the documents from Grodno as well as those from Słonim refer to settled people, servants. Only the entry in the Grodno acts about horse dealing might suggest that here we encounter a wandering group, or a group moving from town to town and market to market, just as other traders, looking for good opportunities for selling and buying livestock. So, in the case of the Słonim and Grodno settlements, employment as servants are characteristic features of the local Gypsies who lived individually or in families, but not in groups. Small groups were formed only for the purpose of horse dealing, in order to facilitate transportation, animal care, or protection. This seems to lead us to the conclusion that the documents presented here (from the Lublin area, Podlasie, or Grodno area) depict Gypsies who were almost assimilated, or at least very advanced in their adaptation to the local culture. Only the documents from Minsk and Połock show a different character and a distinct identity of Gypsies; we see communities united by certain bonds, with their own internal organization and norms.

The documents from Minsk and Połock are divided by half a century. The Połock acts date back to 1533 and the Minsk one to 1595.

Both refer to groups. The first one tells us about a community that appears to be a wandering group, albeit well accustomed to the local conditions and people. The document from the end of the century entered in the Minsk books depicts a settled community that formed a well-integrated group with its own authorities, institutions and norms, respected both within the group as well as by the non-Gypsy local community. We do not know anything about their sources of income, but they were certainly not a group on the margins of the society, living off stealing or alms. The fact that among the witnesses of the oath there were representatives of the nobility indirectly indicates the relatively high status and wealth of this Gypsy group.

Połock is located further to the east of Minsk. The Gypsies referred to in the 1533 documents appear to have been a group that had arrived from the south. It is possible that a route of Gypsy wanderings crossed the eastern parts of the Commonwealth, running from the south from Moldavia and Transylvania to the north.

Out of all the different documents presented here, five referred to Gypsies as "Philistines" (three of these instances are contained in the acts referring to Albert from Rožemberk). All of the entries mentioning "Philistines" come from the Kraków books, and all of them also refer to people living in a group. Four of these records probably refer to a group that arrived from Czechia. Apart from these documents, only one document (from Połock from 1533) mentions another epithet, "newcomers from Egypt Minor." This document also refers to a group. Therefore, we can clearly see that two categories of Gypsies were distinguished. The first one comprised of individuals and families of descendants of arrivals from the previous period during the 15th century, called Gypsies, and the second one comprised of groups migrating from the west and south, arriving in the 16th century, distinguished from the former ones by the use of the term "Philistines" or "arrivals from Egypt Minor." This distinction, I believe, explains why so little information about the expulsion of Gypsies (those not called "Philistines") is present in the documents, even though by then they were a permanent element of the national composition of the Commonwealth.

In short, the word helping us to understand this distinction is the "Philistines." It appeared as an epithet for the Gypsies in Poland in

the mid-16th century, together with the arrival of wandering communities. The biblical Philistines were a non-Semitic tribe settled in Canaan. There were many armed conflicts between them and the Israelites, perceived as the enemy of the chosen people. In colloquial use a “Philistine” means a wanderer (*Konkordancja...*, 1982, 242); as the *Praktyczny słownik biblijny* (*The Practical Biblical Dictionary*) explains, the Philistines are alien people and wanderers (1994, 355). The term “Gypsies” did not have any underlying negative connotation. Yet in the 16th century, wanderers started to arrive. It was during this period when the image of the Gypsies and the attitudes towards them started to change. The term “Philistines” emphasized the nomadic and alien character of the group, and could also be seen as a sign of the distancing from and hidden hostility towards Gypsies. The Gypsies, as we can see from the documents analyzed before, did not inspire animosity. Only the Philistines-Gypsies, the wanderers living in their own groups, started to elicit animosity.

Summarizing the conclusions drawn from the source documents discussed in this chapter, consider the concluding points below. We should pay attention once again to the change in the perceptions of Gypsies, to the emerging diversity of the image of Gypsies, and the complexity of the community. The arrival of the wandering Gypsies is of importance in these changes.

- 1) Records regarding individuals or families named Cygan, so frequent in the previous century, are rather sparse in the 16th century. We can find very few traces of the characters registered previously by the Sanok, Przemyśl, Lwów, or Kraków acts. It appears that the (types of) persons those books referred to underwent full assimilation, which culminated in the change of their family names (which was certainly assisted by the lack of fully formed patterns of surname adoption and inheritance) as well as their absorption into the local non-Gypsy community.
- 2) The documents also mention (although rather infrequently) persons who, despite being settled, have close relations with other individuals referred to as “Gypsies.” This is undoubtedly a clear indication of the existence of ethnic bonds and awareness about the genetic-cultural distinction from the local people.

The existence of different forms of their own institutions is a manifestation of this phenomenon. At the same time, settlement, regular cooperation with non-Gypsies, and employment in service, all indicate an advanced process of cultural adaptation to the local models.

- 3) Starting from the second quarter of this century, groups of nomadic Gypsies start to appear in different parts of the Commonwealth (even so far as its eastern peripheries). They arrive from the west, probably fleeing the repressions that had intensified in the Western European countries, as well as from the south, from Moldavia, Transylvania, and Hungary. In the latter case, the reasons for migration were probably new opportunities for earning and better living conditions.
- 4) The older documents refer to “Gypsies.” Documents during this century start to refer to “Philistines” and “Egyptians,” and indicate Egypt (or Egypt Minor) as the origin of the newcomers only after the arrival of wandering groups from the west. This leads us to the conclusion that the story about the Egyptian origins of the Gypsies, as well as the terms formed on the basis of this belief, originated in Western Europe towards the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of Renaissance. From there it was brought to Poland by migrating Gypsy groups and supported by various documents showing their credentials.
- 5) A new category of Gypsies start to appear, including house and manor house servants, in particular within the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Some of them may be descendants of the 15th-century newcomers. But on the whole, these Gypsies were migrants from the south and were not necessarily nomads, but rather people who migrated in search of employment opportunities, and having found them, settled permanently at the private properties of their employers.
- 6) For the first time, documents start to mention Gypsies as horse dealers and craftsmen. These professions begin to be perceived as specifically Gypsy trades.

- 7) The 16th-century sources also record the first complaints and court trials regarding thefts and robberies. It is impossible to find out the reasons for the growing number of thefts committed by Gypsies on the local population. One of the possible explanations is their impoverishment, and another is coercion by the local settled people. It is worth emphasizing, however, that thefts committed by Gypsies were still relatively rare and that instances of robberies and thefts by non-Gypsies during this period were much more common.
- 8) The documents also mention cases of attempts to expel Gypsies from the Commonwealth, resulting from the enforcement of the legislation adopted during this century, as well as court trials of people who provided them with shelter on their estates. These cases were, however, surprisingly rare and inefficient, implying that the legislation against Gypsies did not have popular social support or consent, apart from some infrequent cases, and that the Gypsies were not perceived as a threat.
- 9) Cases of dispute settlements within the Gypsy community clearly demonstrate the presence of formed and integrated ethnic groups. At the same time, we see (not infrequently) instances of reliance on non-Gypsy municipal courts in disputes and cases regarding the affairs of the Gypsy community exclusively.

DOCUMENTS

№ 305.—1533 г., лістапада 26, Полацк.

|| Żaloba mieszczanina Połockocho Nekrasza л. 224.
на Суганов з Маłego Егypту о poczynienie szkod
у figłow в domu jego.

Смотрели есмо того дела.

Стоали перед[ъ] нами ѿчевисто.

Жаловалъ намъ мещанинъ г[оспо]д[а]р[ск]ий Полоцк[ий] Некрашъ на Миклаша з Гавѣшта цыганина з Маłego Гейпту и на Арыну, а на Фршулю, а Барбару, а Ганну, а Дороту и на инѣшихъ цыганокъ, которые сут[ъ] под[ъ] тымъ Миклашомъ послушенствомъ, тым[ъ] ѿбываем[ъ]: штожъ тые цыганьки, безъ моей бытности, будучи мне на торгу, у воторок[ъ], у вилию св[я]тое Альжбеты, в дому моемъ пили и в тот[ъ] час[ъ] в[ъ] дворе моем[ъ] пивѣши скакали и иншие дивные речы строили. А за тым[ъ] у мене згинуло съ скрынъки двадцат копъ грошей и сыгнеты два, и иншие речы. Тое всее шкоды стало ми ся на трыдцат копъ грошей. И поведилъ, ижъ бы тые п[е]н[е]зи мели до цыганок[ъ] вылетети за тыхъ дивныхъ речей в[ъ] дому его чиненемъ.—И Миклашъ ѿт[ъ] тыхъ цыганокъ напротив[ъ] того мовилъ: абы имъ тое легкости и соромоты не чинилъ, а в томъ ся добре ѿбачилъ, а тое шкоды своей межи своими людьми домовыми смотрель, бо тые цыганьки в дому его были по рану. Которым[ъ] жона его на тот[ъ] часъ за грошъ меду дала, а ѿни сами за полѣтора гроша меду собе купили и тот[ъ] медъ выпивши з дому его прочъ пошли, и черес[ъ] тое того дня в[ъ] дому его не были, и тое шкоды ему тые сироты, которые-жъ ся, пробо[у]т[ъ] просечы, в недостатку своемъ живять, не вчинили, бо то не естъ подобная реч[ъ] абы с коморы, або съ скрынъки мели п[е]н[е]зи вылетети.—И мы Некраша пытали: коли ся ему тая шкода стала, иакъ боръздо то ѿбачилъ? ѿнъ поведилъ: ижъ на завтра, в[ъ]середу рано, день святое Альжбеты, тую шкоду свою ѿбачивши, и ѿ томъ на тые цыганьки тому Миклашу почал[ъ] || мовити. л. 224 адв.
И мы опять Некраша пытали: где тые п[е]н[е]зи в него были?—ѿнъ поведилъ: ижъ тые п[е]н[е]зи были в[ъ] коморе его, п[ъ] малой скрынѣце,

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE

DOC. 1 · 26. II. 1533. The complaint by Niekrasz, a townsman of Połock, against a group of Gypsies who allegedly stole money and valuables from his house (Połock municipal court records).

Belaruski Archiv, t. 2, Minsk 1928, s. 221–222

ѡт[ъ] которое-жъ в него самого ключъ былъ. А тая дей, скринка была в[ъ] другой скрини великой, ѡт[ъ] которое ключы были в[ъ] той же коморе на гвозде. А комора, дей, была такожъ замкомъ замкнута, а ѡт[ъ] нее ключы были у жоны его.—И мы за се Некраша пытали: естли тые замъки у коморы и у скрынъ целые знашолъ?—онъ поведилъ: ижъ у коморы знашолъ замокъ ничимъ перушоный, целый, ѡт[ъ] которого былъ ключ[ъ] въ его жоны, а у скрини дей великой, ѡт[ъ] которой ключъ в[ъ] коморе былъ, такежъ целый замокъ знашелъ, а у тое, дей, скрынъки замокъ рушонъ, в которой п[е]н[е]зи и инъшие речи были, ѡт[ъ] которой в него самого ключъ был. Іакож тую скажоную скрынъку перед[ъ] нами указывалъ.—И еще есмо звышъ того в Некраша пытали на то инъшого которого доводу. онъ на то никоторого доводу не поведилъ мети.

И мы то убачивъши, иж то несть реч[ъ] слушная, абы п[е]н[е]зи черес[ъ] стену мели с коморы съ скрынъ до цыганокъ вылетети, кгдажъ ѡт[ъ] коморы в него жоны ключъ былъ, а тотъ замокъ у коморы ничимъ не рушонъ, а у великое скрини, в[ъ] которой тая скринка с[ъ] пенезми была, такежъ замокъ не рушонъ, ижъ ѡт[ъ] тое скрини тот[ъ] ключ[ъ] тамъ же в[ъ] коморе былъ а тое скринъки, в которой п[е]н[е]зи были, ѡт[ъ] которой у самого ключъ былъ замокъ скаженъ,—знашли есмо ѡт[ъ] тое речи того Миклаша и его цыганокъ правыхъ и в[ъ] томъ невинныхъ. И въсказали есмо Некрашу, абы тое шкоды, естли усхочетъ, межи своими-жъ людьми домовыми смотрелъ.

А при томъ были: закону святого Франъцышка Каръдыанъ Полоцкий ѡтецъ Виценътый, а казнодея ѡтец[ъ] Аръсениос[ъ], а хоружий Полоцкий панъ Оедько Епимаховичъ, а панъ Иванъ Селява бо-иарынъ г[оспо]д[а]р[ск]ий Пблосъкий, а радцы места Полоцкого Довыд[ъ] Панковъ а Марътинъ Щитовъ, а Иванъ Становский.

Писан[ъ] у Полоцку, поабрѣ кѣ [26] д[е]нѣ, индѣктъ з' [17].

[illegible]

DOC. 2 · 27.09.1565–15.05.1566. The entries in the Słonim municipal records for the complaints by Jan Cygan, an official of duke Konstanty Wiśniowiecki at the estate in Dereczyn.

Slonimskij zemskij sud, t. I, 1565–1566 [NGAB: F. 1785, o I, ed. I]

Feria secunda po st doicam
 Indica Anno dñi 1564
 Jadwiga Cyganka Caspra Ludwi-
 ka Cyganka zdopowiedziała gdi
 była pierwszem pićhanjem ty-
 tana, że znała białe i czarne
 wroziła, a od wrozenia bra-
 ła po złotemu a drugie po ko-
 pie
 Jv. za drugiem pićhanjem że-
 znała, iż tfo w mieście w do-
 mu kollaścinem otworzyła i
 złamała kłotkę wjtrigem
 ktori wjtrig wnoznach no sio-
 ła, a tam zepsoraw sja one

ABOVE AND OVERLEAF

DOC. 3 · 20.03.1564. The entry in the municipal records of
 Kazimierz near Kraków for the testimonies by Jadwiga Cyganka
 (the Gypsy woman), the wife of Ludwik from Dobczyce.

Casimirensia acta maleficiorum, 1548–1610 [APK (III): rk K. 266]

67
 kłotkę, vkradła suknią rzuco-
 na panienską, रुपię meką i
 do kielka gustu byaliu
 J. zasnala iz zarnistinnianij vkr-
 adła zroza suknią, a le jęz po-
 tgem rigan tte suknią w sial.
 J. vkradła botfi glosy vew sę.
 J. zasnala, iz ma rozke vutka
 sktora kradła kofosij, gesij
 praducta
 J. zasnala, iz ziganij, tchim sie
 zivix, ze wroza, ze kradux, a
 konnij frimaxra Lobienona

201.
 Ihu Xpi. rahomini fiva d. Zono Ze Znaty
Arestacio Philisteor apud Petrum
zebrzydowski ~ ~ 22
 Mente feris omnium terrarum regni prouidus Ma
 ttheus Masich de Szerahow et nobilis Valentinus
 hobierstij et nicolaus Zahozowski coram offo arch
 pnbibus Caslren Surogar Captus erat personali
 stantibus recognouit quia feria secunda ante fe
 stum Sancti Laurentij martijris proximo pretrita
 Nomine et ex parte Nobilis Anna Stoiongha Vidua
 nobilis olim Laurentij Stoionghij relicta in villa
 Dolusze de tenet et possidet Nobilis Petri Zebzido
 wslj arrestauerunt uiderunt et facietus conpperunt
 p. Sclitrus dictus Chigany quinq. prouipus eorumq.
 liberos et seruos complures ibidem in villa Dolusze
 de tam ab anno d. 1581 facione quorum quid p. Sclit
 stueorum asseruacione eadem mente eadem feria secun
 da ante festum Sancti Laurentij Martijris proxima
 et tunc halem Caslren Surogar Captus erat ad ba
 menandum ex parte et ad instum offi Caslren Surogar
 Captus erat seu instigoris eiusdem officij ex clabore
 et instantia predicti Nobilis Anna Stoiongha in et
 super predictum Nobilem Petrum Zebzydowski in et
 villa prefata Dolusze de apud matheum holo Sierij
 Cussonem posuit posuimq. regalem etiam p. uero
 regalem Petri Zebzydowski in villa eadem puerant
 ad noticiamq. deduxit
Protho contra Nicolaum Lipowski
 ex parte Wielich
 Pizel Wzndemij Lij grossum Surogarolium 211.
 Zambus erat Stoia. opahzny Blazry holik s. f. 10
 Bz general Woienodstwa erat maia. p. Bz f. 10

DOC. 4 · 16.08.1582. The entry in the Kraków municipal records for the account regarding the arrest of Gypsies in the village of Dołuszyce at Piotr Zebrzydowski's place.

Castrensia Cracoviensia Relationes, t. 127 [APK (I)]

perceptor quietandi. Chirographum restitui vel in satisfactionem iure sue
 officio pro ea agere et alia omnia ac singula legimus plenipotentibus
 officio facere tamquam ipse solus ea omnia faceret et exequeretur, 1723.

Paulus Zygarns Alberto Rosenberk

Paulus Zygarns sen Philistinus atq; Esigan Recedendo a
 terris et possessionibus ac iuribus suis quibuscumque libere recognovit quia
 Alberto de Rosenberg Zygarno prefato cohabit eodem anno 1723
 Nativitatis Christi proxime venturo plures se in suis pignus pro
 omnia bona sua habita et habenda inscripsit sub captivacione
 atq; detentione sui iuxta arbitrium ipsius Alberti sustinens usq; ad
 resolutionem debiti prefati nullis modis exquisitis ipsum Albertum facere
 suum evadendo.

Nicolaus Zagar Zygarns Alberto suo seniori

Nicolaus Zygarns sen philistinus atq; Esigan dictus la
 zar Recedendo a terris et possessionibus ac iuribus suis quibuscumque libere reco
 gnovit quia Alberto Zygarno de Rosenberg prefato sue cohabit
 tenebatur cum suis pignus triginta septem annis media marcas pennis
 polonicis monete et cum evolueret ad denarium duorum annorum propter
 hunc sequentium per partes quando aliquid habere poterat sine pre
 iudicio si vero ante denarium duorum annorum ad solvendum integritatem
 debitum prefatum tunc omnem arcam quicquid ante denarium duorum annorum
 ei tradiderit amittet sed ad solvendum novam integritatem triginta
 septem annis media marcarum pennis polonicis monete et cum tenebatur
 cum pignus suum sub detentione atq; captivacione sui iuxta ar
 bitrium ipsius Alberti et successorem eius sustinens usq; ad resolutionem
 debiti prefati nullis modis exquisitis Neq; prescriptione sine facultate
 pignus inscribere ipsum Albertum et eius pignus evadens obligatus se
 non fugere et cum cohabit sed cum eum permanere usq; ad reso
 lutionem debiti prefati. Et sic ipse Paulus Zygarns se ipse Nicolaus
 Zagar etiam recedendo a suo quodlibet iure recognovit se facientes pro

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE

DOC. 5 · 24. 07. 1554. The entries in the Kraków municipal records for the testimonies by the Gypsies: Paweł, Mikołaj, and Jan Zeleniski, debtors of their elder, Albert of Rozemberg.

Castrensis Cracoviensis Relationes, t. 70 [APK (I)]

1924.

1554

ex Nicolao y a prefato Alberto in fignet ante evolutiones debiti
prefati etiam nullis modis ipsa evadendo,

Joēs Zelemiski Zigarns Alberto suo seniori

215^o Joannes Zelemiski Zigarns Recedendo a suo quodlibet alio
sine libere recognovit quia decem marcas pecunie polonice
monete et nūm de barbasas Zigarns etiam rendendo a suo dno
libere recognovit quia octo marcas ac grozot tringita et sex per
cunie polonice monete et nūm ambo. Alberto de Zesembork
Zigaro prefato ipsam eiusque pignus ad decursu duam annorum
ab hinc currentium evoluit se in eam pignus obligaverunt et
inscripserunt sup eam omnia bona habita et fuda ita q groz
currentibus hysce duobus annis in aram ei dederit et integre
non evoluerunt id totu quodlibet eam amittet et ad solucio nona
debiti sui integre tenebatur nec debebunt ipsi debetores ab eo
fugere ante integra solucio debitorum eam prefatum promissa
vero tam in parte q in toto exequi debet sub detentione atq
incarceratione sui iuxta arbitrium ipsius Alberti sustinenda
nullis modis exquirat aut futalibus punitis inscriptumque ipse
Albertum vel eius pignus evadentes,

215^o Joannes Jagmatzkowski contra Laurecin Romatzkowski

¶ Joannes Jagmatzkowski de kasmiria protestatus est
Contra nobilem Laurencium Romatzkowski in Prazech hiedem
quia ipse factis faciendo canonis fidei fidei in actis Castren Gach
contente de actu fene terre ante festu scte Margarete viginti
quatuor anno domini uno currente millesimo quingentesimo qu
quagesimo quarto demerant decemeto pericia communia oct
mita et onco quadraginta nūm per ipm Laurenciu roma
zkowski venerabile domus felix diepto et eius consensu p
pnt in Gach etiam subdpt de noliā abact et huc ad offm
Castren Gach tradit paratib eque ea in re cognitos offm Castren
Gach audire di eiq sub principalibus pro quibus fidei f
iuxta acta Castren Gach hunc canonem et ipsa pericia sta
tuere reati si ex Laurencio Romatzkowski in termino eiq fi

№ 144. —1595 г., Февраля 7 дня. Ршенье цыганской копы по жалобѣ о произведеніи безпорядковъ.

Вписанье листу судового цыганского въ справе Александра Матусовича, цыганина съ Каспоромъ Мартиновичомъ, цыганиномъ, слугою его.

Року 1595, месеца Февраля осмого дня.

На враде господарскомъ игродскомъ въ замку Менскомъ, передо мною Симономъ Матеевичомъ, подстаростемъ Менскимъ, постановившимъ очевидно цыганимъ, на име Александръ Матусовичъ, покладать листъ судебный о забитіи жены своею подъ печатомъ и съ подписомъ рукъ людей зацныхъ, писмомъ польскимъ писаннымъ, и просилъ, абы тотъ листъ до книгъ игродскихъ Менскихъ былъ уписанъ, который листъ, уписуя до книгъ, слово одъ слова такъ се въ себе маеть: Działo się w Jarszewiczach roku Panskiego 1594, m-ca Maia dnia dwudziestego. Sługa iego x. mci pana Krisztofa Radziwiła—woiewody Wilenskiego, na imie Aleksandr Matysowicz, cygan żałował pred pani wszystkimi bracią swoją cyganami przed Stanisławem Szczesnowiczem, Janem Pawłowiczem, Alexandrem Gabryiałowiczem. Matysiem Awgustynowiczem, Sebestyanem Szczestnowiczem, Andrzejem Szczesnowiczem, Stanisławem Dzado-wiczem, Matysiem Floryjanowiczem, Kaspem Andreiewiczem, Symonem Gregorewiczem, na służę swego, na imie Kaspra Marcinowicza, cygana, yż on będąc w dzierzawie iego mci pana woiewody Wilenskiego w Hainie, nie wiem jakim duchem uwiedziony y swej woli napelniony będąc, uczynił burdę y zwade wielką, którą zwadą swą pobudził pospolstwo w miescie Hainskim, że na gwałt poczeli dzwonic, skąd się tym więtsza zwada y burda y zamięszanie wszczęło, w którym zamieszaniu y gwałcie od onegosz Kaspra Marcinowicza uczniomym małżonka zwyż mianowanego sługi iego x. mci Aliexandra Matysowicza będąc starta y zszarpana, niedoczekawszy tydnia, umarła. A tak my zwyż pomienione, przestuchawszy żalobe zwysz mianowanego Aliexandra Matysowicza złożyliśmy zjazd y prawo ku wysłuchaniu sprawiedliwości w Jarszewiczach miasteczku na dzien dwudziesty Maia miesiąca w tym że roku, na ktorzi dzień gdysmy sie ziechali, tedy zwyż mianowany Aliexander Matysowicz pre-

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ABOVE AND OPPOSITE

DOC. 6 · 08. 02. 1595. The entry in the Muńsk municipal records regarding the verdict by the Gypsy court issued on May 20, 1594 in Jarszewicze, condemning Kasper Marcinowicz, the Gypsy, to death in the case of the killing of the wife of Matysowicz, the Gypsy.

Akty Izdawajemyje Vilenskoju Archeografickuju Kommissieju (Akty o kopnych sudach), t. XVIII, Vilna 1891

łożył pred nami skargę zwysz pomienioną, yż on swą zwadą małżonkę iego na imię Rożą Floryanowne s tego swiata zbawił. Nadto dowodził swiatkami, iż nie tylko na on czas w Hainie, ale y po wszystkie czasy na każdym miescie stał na iego zdrowie y małżonki iego. Na co odpowiedział obwiniony Kasper Marcinowicz mówiąc, gdyż na mie te wine kładzie Alexander Mathysowicz, abym ia miał swą przyczyną małżonkę iego s tego swiata zbawic, niechai tego dowodzi ludzmi dobrzeziemi. Tedy mu zaraz postanowił ten Alexander Mathisowicz swiatkow dwudziestu thak swych przyaciół, iako y onego obwinionego, s ktorych swiatkow sam Kasper Marcinowicz obrał sobie trzech, dawając się na nich, to iesth na Sebestyana Janowicza, na Awgustyna Mykłaszewicza, na Stanisława Marcinowicza, na ktorich też pozwolił i Alexander Matysowicz, ktore swiatkowie zeznali pred nami, yż za iego początkiem stała się tha zwada i gwałt y zamordowanie małżonki iego. My tedy wysłuchawszy pilnie swiatkow y dowodu, iako takowego, ktori wzrusza pokoi pospolity i lud do gwałtu i przez ktorego się stało zamordowanie małżonki iego, skazalismy na gardło i skazalismy, aby strona powodowa obwinioną samo siodmą porzysięgła dnia dwudziestego trzeciego Maia; tedy ta strona stoiąc powodowa Alexander Mathysowicz reki, niechai ten obwiniony Kasper Marcinowicz odprisięże się z przyacióły swemi samo siodmy, a ia go wolno puszcze. Ale on nie chciał, ani iego przyaciele, mówiąc, niechai mnie Alexanderz porzysięże samo siodmy, a ia iestem gotow dac gardło. A tak obaczwszy Alexander Matisowicz iego upor, wziął się za przisięge, ktorąsmy złożyli dnia zwysz mianowanego; a gdy przyszedł dzien treci, tedy był gotow powod obwinioną stronę prawem pokonać według sądu naszego i czekał od poranka aż do wieczora, lecz strona obwiniona Kasper Marcino-wicz, ani sam przez się, ani przez przyjaciela swego onego roku nie pilnował i zwysz mianowanego Alexandra Matisowicza do przisięgi nie przywoził. Przeto my powodowę stronę czyniąc wolne od przisięgi, tego Kaspra Marcinowicza na gardło skazuiemy według sądu y dekrety wszitkiei braci naszej. A ysz się to prawo nasze toczyło na imieniu a pod bokiem iego mci pana Jana Zacharewskiego, na ten czas w Jarszewicach będącego, prosilismy iego mc dla lepszej wiadomości wszyscy społecznie

o przyłożenie pieczęci i o podpis ręki, tak też y iego mc pana Andreia Skiepora, ktori na ten czas był w Jarszewicach, i pana Harasima Soroczinskiego, sługi iego mc pana podkanclerego, który na ten czas był w Jarszewiczach i pana Alexandra Gobreiłowicza cygana. Pisan w Jarszewiczach, miesiąca i roku zwysz mianowanego. У того листу печатей притисненихъ пять, а подпись рукъ, подписанный письмомъ польскимъ и рускимъ, тыми словами: Jan Zacharewski ręką. Andrei Skiepor ręką swą. Adam Lopiński ręką swą. Woiciech Semborski ręką swą. Гарасимъ Сорочинский рукою власною. Который листъ вышеи писанный, на враде покладанный, есть до книгъ кгродскихъ Меньскихъ уписанъ.

Тоже, л. 129—31.

Piotr Rotemberg—A Philistine from Egypt Minor, with His Company

The most original and complete collection of documents regarding a group of Gypsies wandering in the territories of the Commonwealth and the neighboring lands is that related to Piotr Rotemberg, a knight and count, a Philistine from Egypt Minor, as he is referred to in the documents. This is a unique collection. The majority of information regarding Gypsies that we find is contained in individual acts, rarely related to one another. This case is exceptional in that we see a number of records referring to the same figure. In the case of Piotr Rotemberg, we can trace the wandering route of his group over many years and many kilometres. Apart from the information related to Piotr himself, this collection contains information referring to Gypsies, which is of high significance for understanding their past, especially the most ancient one. The entire collection of documents is contained in the complex of acts of the Prussian *Etats-Ministerium*. They were stored at the Königsberg archive and were removed before the retreat of the German troops from Prussia. Eleven of the documents regarding Piotr's group are in Latin, six are in Polish, and the same number in German. There is also one in Ruthenian and one in Flemish. The majority come from the northern territories of the Commonwealth. This is similar to the documents discussed in the following chapters (also from the former Königsberg archive), which also refer mainly to the northern and northeastern territories of the Commonwealth.

It is difficult to say how they turned up in Königsberg. It is likely that the oldest acts (those regarding Gypsies from the 16th–17th centuries) had been previously kept in one of the castles belonging to the

Birze Dynasty line of the Radziwiłłs, most probably in Birze¹ itself. The Radziwiłłs were undoubtedly the most powerful and wealthy family in this part of the Commonwealth. Their archives contain numerous documents referring to Gypsies as well as other national and religious groups. The question remains: How was such a large collection of material concerning Gypsies accumulated, including the more than 20 documents referring to the name of Piotr of Rotemberg? The letters of Piotr Rotemberg were probably kept by him, and later by his descendants, before they were acquired by somebody who recognized their significance and included them in the library-archive resources. It is not known when this happened, but probably long ago. It is unlikely that Gypsies themselves kept them all the way until modern times. It is intriguing to wonder who accumulated these acts and why. We probably will never know the answer and can only conjecture that this was somehow related to the Radziwiłłs.

Many Gypsies lived on the Radziwiłłs' properties in the Ruthenia-Lithuania territories and only a part of them were nomadic. The majority, as it appears, were permanently settled, making a living from trade and crafts, or being employed as servants. This territory was rich in a mutual permeation of cultures, languages, and religions, where the Gypsies were just one of the elements of the national mosaic, and their different ways were considered nothing extraordinary. To a large extent, this richness appears to have contributed to the rather reasonable attitude towards Gypsies in this region. Many documents unambiguously show that Gypsies eagerly stayed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where they found opportunities for living and refuge. This may help to explain how such a considerable collection of documents was preserved, including the documents referring to Piotr Rotemberg.

The collection of documents related to the name of Rotemberg consists of 25 letters dating from the years 1542–1561, and interval of more than nineteen years, including three documents issued in the name of Andrzej Rotemberg from 1547–1549. In principle, they are all introductory letters, but from them we also learn a lot about the group itself. The dates and places of issuance allow us to see the

¹ Birze (now Biržai) is a city in eastern Lithuania.

scope of their wandering, although they do not give, understandably, a full picture.

In the collection of acts regarding Piotr and his group, there is also a letter dated from 1507 and issued by the Archbishop of Lyon. This document seems to be exceptionally significant for the future of the group, and the fact that they were well received and given introductory letters for their further journeys. It is known that the Gypsies wandering around Europe often told the story that they had been expelled from Egypt, and that their wandering was of an expiatory nature, or an atonement imposed upon them by the Pope for their ancestors having resisted the faith. Because of the nature of their pilgrimage, which they would explain to the locals, the Pope recommended that secular and ecclesiastical authorities should support them with food and money, in this errant but worthy pilgrim's life. These words were confirmed by papal letters, although there is evidence that they were forged. In 16th-century documents found in Kraków, Minsk, and the former archive of Königsberg, and documents from the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Małopolska (Lesser Poland), the term "emigrants/expellees from Egypt Minor," appears in reference to the Gypsies. However, copies of the papal letters sanctioning the Gypsies' wandering, and recommending providing support to them, or even ordering it under threat of excommunication, were not found anywhere. The only such instance known to me is the document issued by the Archbishop of Lyon, which was found among the acts of Piotr Rotemberg. Although the name mentioned in the alleged archbishop's document sounds slightly different, I believe that it should not be difficult to explain that the letter refers to the same family or group, if any of the persons issuing the following letters read the Latin text carefully enough. It is also possible that Piotr acquired the letter allegedly issued in Lyon from a Gypsy named Greyffenburg, who was the subject of a complaint made by Piotr in the royal chancellery in Kraków (we will come back to this a bit later). The following is the beginning of the alleged archbishop's letter: "Charles [---] Cardinal of Lyon and primate of Gaul. To all our brother cardinals and archbishops [---] priors, parish priests, vicars [---] cities, castles, Lyon diocese [---] [we announce that] Julius the Second, the Pope by divine providence [has issued] a letter

that is a parchment bull stamped with a lead seal in accordance with the custom of the Roman Curia”²(*Et.—Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 2).

Further on, the papal bull is cited. It says that Pope Julius II issued this document on the request of penitents, having in mind the salvation of their souls, and in particular, on account of Piotr from Greyffenburg, a knight from Egypt Minor. The bull tells a tale common during that time in Europe, often presented by Gypsies themselves. According to the tale, before the times of Emperor Sigismund, the people had lived in Egypt in the Christian faith, but later they had forsaken it (see Andreas 1932, 112; Foletier 1970, 47; Huizinga 1967, v, 1, 52). The Emperor defeated the pagans, freeing Egypt Minor. At the time, in order to be restored to the Christian community, people of Egypt Minor abased themselves before Pope Martin III, who decided that for 70 years they “must make pilgrimage and do penance in foreign lands [---] in order to perfect their Faith.”³ Further, he ordered bishops, priors, clergymen, and lay people to welcome them, let them wander, not causing any obstacles to Piotr from Greyffenburg, to open city gates and if the need be, to allow them to bury their dead at cemeteries. Those who come to Gypsies with help will receive absolution of all sins as in the jubilee year, the document says. In what follows, it is said that all inquiries and trials can only be performed by knight Piotr, nobody should interfere with his actions, but instead should assist him. Those who oppose this ruling will bring the wrath of God and the Apostles Peter and Paul upon themselves. Then the date is given, when Julius II, Martin’s successor, allegedly issued the bull to the Gypsies, the 12th of October, 1506. Next, the Cardinal of Lyon addresses priests, citing the papal bull, and orders them “under threat of excommunication,” when the above mentioned knight and his subjects arrive to welcome them and let the members of the Christian Church give them alms. Whereas, to all “who give a helping hand to

² Translated from Polish: “Karol [---] kardynał Lyonu oraz prymas Galii. Wszystkim braciom naszym kardynałom, arcybiskupom [---] przeorom, proboszczom, wikarym, plebanom [---] miastom, zamkom diecezji łiońskiej [---] [donosimy, że] Juliusz Drugi z opatrności B.ożej papież [wystawił] pismo czyli bullę pergaminową, pieczęcią ołowianą obyczajem kurii rzymskiej opieczętowaną.”

³ Translated from Polish: “mają pielgrzymować i pokutować w ziemi obcej [---] by bardziej poprawili się w wierze.”

the above mentioned knight and his family, we mercifully give forty days of indulgence”⁴ (ibid.). The letter of the Lyon Hierarch is dated August 12th, 1507.

With this document, telling the story popular in Europe about their past, Gypsies arrived in the Commonwealth. Even though in the transcripts published earlier the figure of Piotr from Greyffenburg does not appear, the document must have been useful to Piotr Rotemberg. Only few could have seen that the document was a forgery. For the majority of civil and probably religious authorities the document did not arouse any suspicions. It takes a more thorough analysis for us to claim that we encounter a 16th-century forgery and not an original document issued by the highest church hierarch in Lyon.

The person who issued the document for Greyffenburg is, as the introductory formula tells us, Charles, the Cardinal of Lyon and Deacon of St. Martin in Montibus. However, this title at the time belonged to Tamás Bakócz, the Hungarian Chancellor, who received the cardinal hat in 1500. Whereas the Archbishop of Lyon of that time, who was not raised to the rank of cardinal, was François de Rohan (*Hierarchia...*, 1923, 67, 230). Charles is thus a fictional character. The alleged cardinal of Lyon cites the bull of Pope Julius II, who was the pope at the time (in 1503–1513, to be precise). The cited bull says that the residents of Egypt Minor, freed by Emperor Sigismund, went to the Pope seeking penance. The alleged bull clearly mentions the name of Pope “Martinus Tercius,” or Martin III, the pope at the time. Here, there is another historical error: Martin was the Pope from 942–946, and at that time there were no Gypsies in Europe. Emperor Sigismund’s contemporary was Pope Martin V (Wierusz–Kowalski 1988, 74). It is rather improbable that the chancellery of Julius II made a mistake in such a matter. Besides, the bull lacks the year of the pontificat, which is usually included in such documents. At the same time, there is no mention of the Gypsies’ stay or the issuance of such a document in the Vatican archives (Andreas 1932, III–II5). Additionally, the Pope and the Cardinal of Lyon promise surprisingly long periods of indulgence for helping Gypsies with alms which, together

⁴ Translated from Polish: “którzy wspomnianemu rycerzowi i rodzinie jego dłoń pomocną podaliby, czterdzieści dni odpustu miłosierdzie w Panu dajemy.”

with the threat of excommunication for all those who refuse it, raises additional doubts.

The papal bull gives jurisdiction over Gypsies into the hands of Piotr Greyffenburg, excluding them from the jurisdiction of other persons. For Gypsies, this is an exceptionally important element, since in the beginning of the 16th century there was escalation in repressions, especially in the German lands. Animosity towards Gypsies went so far as refusing them burial at Christian cemeteries or priest services. That is where such a seemingly surprising detail in the bull comes from. The letter, although forged, undoubtedly aided the Gypsies in their travelling as well as living. At the same time, it shows that this was not a community of vagrants or primitive people, as they were portrayed in the literature from the 16th century and later. Using such and similar letters, Gypsies had to have understood their meaning, and they must have known the circumstances, as well as the hierarchy of values of the people surrounding them. They must have also known how such a document should appear, as well as how and where to obtain it.

With this introductory letter, they arrived in Pomerania, Prussia, and later in the territories of the Commonwealth. The oldest preserved letter referring to Piotr Rotemberg dates back from 1542, and was issued in Janiszki, near the modern Lithuanian-Latvian border. This means that the group had arrived in this part of Europe much earlier and that prior to their wandering in the Commonwealth territories, they had been in Prussia, soon after the end of the Polish-Teutonic wars. We do not know anything about their prior lives, where the name von Rotemberg comes from, and whether Lyon was indeed on their migratory route. What is certain—and the preserved letters point to this—is that they predominantly travelled and stayed in regions where German language was of common use.

Piotr Rotemberg received the first introductory letter in 1542, though the name Rotemberg, or a very similar-sounding one, appeared in earlier sources. While we cannot answer the question whether this has any relation to Piotr, I believe that this fact is worth mentioning as such a possibility exists. Thus, in 1512, Prince Bogusław X of Szczecin-Pomerania issued a document of safe conduct for the Egypt Minor Count Ludwik von Rothenburg, allowing

a group of Gypsies to pass through his lands in the direction of Gdańsk. Bogusław also asked civic and religious authorities to welcome and provide shelter to the holder of the letter and the mentioned Gypsies, so that they could safely make their way to Gdańsk (Bülow 1884, 68).⁵ Today we are unable to refer to the original or to the cited book. In 1942–1944, the collections of the old Szczecin archive were scattered amongst various places in the face of allied powers' air raids, and not all survived the war and were returned to Szczecin. Many were destroyed, including the book of safe passages of Bogusław X.

We do not know whether Ludwik von Rothenburg is in any way related to Piotr, yet it is worth noticing that Ludwik's route led to the territories where, according to the preserved letters, Piotr spent most of his time. It is also worth considering another record. In the archives of Tallinn (the capital of contemporary Estonia) it is mentioned that on the 22nd of March 1953, "[c]lawes von Rottenberch, a Gypsy, was brought in on account of the deadly blow he had dealt to Christoffer Rottenberch."⁶

Whether this document was in any way related to Ludwik, or more importantly to Piotr, we do not know, but again it is possible. The coincidence of names is obvious and the migratory routes are also similar. It is therefore possible that these two records, from Szczecin and from Tallinn, refer to one of Piotr's predecessors, earlier leaders of the same group.

The first document, referring to Piotr Rotemberg was issued in Janiszki (located in contemporary Lithuania, near the border with

⁵ Translated from German: (?) "Und ist derhalben unser vleyssig und feuntlich bitten, gutlich synnen unnd beger an wen er mit diessem unserm brieve gelanget, ime gnad, gunst, furderung und guten willen von unsern wegen zu bezeigenn, ime auch behausung und herbrig mitzuteylen, auff das er also unvorhindert solichen seinen fhurgenommen weg zciehn und fhulbringen moge. Das seind wir umb ein idern nach gebur willig unndt feuntlich zu vordinen, zu beschuldenn unnd in gnaden gontlich zu erkennen gneigt, und die unsern thuen daran unser gantze zuverlassige meynungk."

⁶ Translated from German: "ward geleitet Clawes von Rottenberch, ein Zigeuner, eines Todschlages wegen, den er an einem gewissen Christoffer Rottenberch, dem Sohn des Bruders seines Vaters, begangen hat." Information taken from: P. Ariste, *Laiuse Mustladed*, Tartu 1940, p. 3. Not having access to this work, I have included a citation from: Gilsenbach 1994, 143.

Latvia) on the 20th of May, 1542. This is an introductory letter issued by the vicegerent of the bishop of Łuck (Janiszki belonged to the bishop's property). Jan Żyliński, the vicegerent, states that Piotr Rotemberg, a Philistine from Egypt Minor, "conducted himself well, honestly and virtuously among the residents and subjects."⁷ Żyliński also asks that they be welcomed, should they arrive, and protected against any harm, because, "they do penance for their ancestors' abandonment of the faith and I wish you to offer them a helping hand" (*Et.-Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 17). Most likely the forged document by the cardinal of Lyon encouraged Żyliński to mention the penitential nature of Piotr's and his group's wandering.

Żyliński, similarly to other low-rank officials, who most often signed these introductory letters, is a figure whom we know nothing about, whereas in 1542, the year the document was issued, the bishop of Łuck was indeed Jerzy Chwalczewski (Nitecki 1992, 39). It is also hard to understand the reason for the arrival of Piotr's group in Janiszki. The city was famous for fairs where horses were brought from far away. Most likely the dates and locations of these fairs influenced the route Piotr Rotemberg and his group took.

About two months later, Piotr Rotemberg and his group arrived in Jeziorasy.⁸ On the 12th of May 1542, he received another introductory letter issued by Marcin Stanisławycz, the vicegerent of the bishop of Vilnius, Paweł Holszański (*Et.-Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 4; DOC. 1). Jeziorasy was part of the Vilnius bishopric's property, and Paweł Holszański, who was mentioned in the letter, was indeed the bishop at that time (Nitecki 1992 81). Today this town is located in the northeastern part of Lithuania, next to the border with Latvia. The distance between Jaziorasy and Janiszki in a straight line is about 200 km; however, forests and lakes made such a route impossible. The most likely route that Piotr and his company took was the small road via Szawle, Poniewież, and later Wiłkomierz, ⁹ up to the road linking it with Jeziorasy and Dyneburg (today Dāvgaļpils in Latvia).

⁷ Translated from Polish: "dobrze, skromnie, szczerze oraz cnotliwie między mieszkańcami i poddanymi zachowywał się."

⁸ Now Zarasai, a city in eastern Lithuania.

⁹ Now Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Ukmerge, Kaunas, cities in Lithuania.

It is interesting that both letters are identical. The only difference is the names of the persons issuing them, their dates, and place of issuance. Most likely, the persons issuing the introductory letters to Gypsies made their lives easier by simply copying fragments from previous letters, which Gypsies presented when asking for permission to stay or pass through someone's property. It appears that Stanisławycz from Jeziorasy ordered the letter by Żyliński from Janiszki to be copied. The different handwriting in the two cases lets us assume that the letters are authentic, which is also confirmed by the correct names of the bishops and the dates. I also believe that it was not a coincidence that both letters were issued on the properties of bishops. Piotr Rotemberg was probably right to assume that if he could prove his identity by presenting a letter issued by an official of a bishopric, it would be easier to win favor and support from other bishops' estates. None of these letters provide information regarding how long Piotr and his people stayed in Janiszki and Jeziorasy, and it is hard to say how long they were staying in the Lithuanian or Belarus lands of the then Commonwealth. The next record about Piotr's group is dated three years later and comes from Podole in Ukraine, more than 1000 km away from the locations of the previous letters.

On the 14th of August, 1545, Hieronim Lanckoroński, the starosta of Skała in Podole (on the Zbrucz river, today in Ukraine) granted Piotr Rotemberg a letter. Just as before, it is written in Latin, and this time without the formula about the expiatory character of his wandering (although the term "pilgrims" is used). Also, in this letter Piotr is not merely a "Philistine from Egypt Minor," but during the past three years he had been promoted to a noble-born. The letter of Lanckoroński refers to him as "Noble-born Piotr Count of Rotemberg from Egypt Minor." I believe that from an outsider's perspective, Piotr's group, and above all he himself, must have looked dignified, since Lanckoroński refers to him as a count. We also learn from the letter that Piotr's stay in the territory of starostwo was a longer one and that during this time, as it is confirmed by Hieronim Lanckoroński, "he and his procession behaved virtuously and politely, without any complaints from the subjects of his Royal Majesty"¹⁰(*Et.—Min.*, 110 b,

¹⁰ Translated from Polish: "przyzwoicie, cnotliwie oraz grzecznie zachował się ze swoim orszakiem, bez jakiegokolwiek skargi poddanych jego królewskiej mości."

Nr 3, 21). Further on in the letter the author asks all voivodes, castellans, starostas, etc., to welcome him and protect him from any harm when he arrives, just as any pilgrim would deserve to be treated.

We do not learn from this or from any other letters how Piotr and his group earned their living. Yet, it is from the letter by Lanckoroński that we learn that trade, most likely in horses, was an important and profitable occupation for the Gypsies. The document is issued on the 14th of August, on the eve of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, and on this day there was a large fair in Skala (*Słownik geograficzny...*, t. X, 1889, 642–643; also: Dworzaczek 1959, tabl. 101). I believe that the arrival of Piotr and his group in Skala was not incidental. Probably the fair and the opportunity for trade were important factors in determining the route this group traveled. For precisely this reason, it is likely that Skala and the neighbouring communities became a place for Gypsy visits, stays, and sometimes settlement. The conformity of the different elements of the text, such as the place, dates, and names, point to the fact that the document is authentic.

As in case of the Lithuanian territories, the group stayed for a longer period, as we can judge on the basis of the dates of the letters. The document issued in Równe in Wołyń (today Rivne in Ukraine, to the northeast of Lwów) by Wasyl Kurcewicz, leaseholder of Równe, is the only document written in Ruthenian. The duke (*kniaź*), who really was at the time the leaseholder of Równe, writes that Piotr Rotemberg, a Gypsy *rittmeister* from Egypt Minor, presented letters issued by other princes and lords (Wolff 1895, 198). Kurcewicz thus also asks all to protect Piotr and his group against any harm and not to forbid giving food to them, because “they do penance, ordered by the Pope, the father of the Roman Church”¹¹ (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 11). It appears that Piotr still possessed the forged document from Lyon and was still successfully using it.

One of the most interesting documents in the Piotr Rotemberg collection is a letter issued by the royal chancellery in Kraków on the 25th of October, 1549, “on his Royal Majesty’s own order.”¹² More

¹¹ Translated from Polish: “oni odprawiają pokutę, nakazaną im przez Ojca Świętego, papieża kościoła rzymskiego.”

¹² Translated from Polish: “na własne jego królewskiej mości rozkazanie.”

than three years had elapsed from Piotr's stay in Równe. This letter proves that Piotr's group did not limit their wanderings to the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, today's Ukraine and Lesser Poland. The document states, "We were presented in the name of noble Piotr from Rotenberg, a knight from Egypt Minor, a grave complaint against noble Piotr Antoni from Griffenberg and his sons as well as his nephew Jerzy and his relatives, that they attacked him when he was travelling by a public road in the Duchy of Masovia."¹³ We learn that the attackers kidnapped some persons from Piotr's group "of both sexes." In what follows, the author of the document (probably the secretary of the royal chancellery on behalf of the king) asks voivodes, starostas, castellans, city mayors, and officials of different ranks to "offer all and any aid to this Piotr from Rotenberg wherever he may seek the mentioned bandits [---] in order to pursue them, capture them or bring them to justice or pass judgement for recompensation"¹⁴ [---] (*Et.-Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 28; DOC. 2). This document clearly shows that within the three years that had elapsed from their stay in Równe, Piotr's group travelled not only in the territories of Ruthenia or Lesser Poland, but that they may have circulated in the territories of central Poland or passed through Mazovia, towards Prussia, and then moved to the south, the trace of which is this letter issued in Kraków.

I would like to draw the attention to two more significant issues. The document mentions the name of Piotr Griffenberg, the same name that was mentioned in the alleged document issued forty years earlier by the Cardinal of Lyon. Even though the spelling of the name differs, I believe that this was just an error made by the clerk. We do not know anything about the family relations between the noble-born Piotrs, Rotemberg and Griffenberg. Most certainly there

¹³ Translated from Polish: "Przedstawiono przed nami imieniem szlachetnego Piotra z Rotenbergu, rycerza z Małego Egiptu, ciężką skargę przeciwko szlachetnemu Piotrowi Antoniemu z Griffenbergu i synom tegoż, a także bratankowi Jerzemu oraz jego krewnym, że na podróżyującego drogą publiczną w Księstwie Mazowieckim [---] napadli."

¹⁴ Translated from Polish: "gdziekolwiek wspomnianych rozbójników swoich ten Piotr z Rotenbergu *dopałtby* [---] abyście [---] dla ich ścigania, ujęcia lub pojmania albo dla posłuszeństwa prawu i osądzenia zapłaty [---] jemu wszystkimi sposobami i środkami byli pomocni."

is some sort of relation between them, since Rotemberg used the forged introductory letter issued by the cardinal of Lyon for the name of Greyffenburg. The assault on Rotemberg's group, mentioned in Zygmunt August's document, is not a simple robbery. Rotemberg knows the attackers well, the leader, as well as other participants in the assault and their family relations. The reason of the dispute is not known; it might have been a conflict related to the possession of the letter from Lyon. Perhaps the kidnapping of those several persons held special significance, as it could not have been simply a matter of kidnapping for matrimonial purposes. I would like to draw attention to the issue of the kidnapping, or perhaps fleeing from Piotr Rotemberg, because it reappears in later letters that Rotemberg received in the cities of southern Poland.

There is one more important issue. According to contemporary literature, the only institutions that can settle misunderstandings and conflicts are institutions within the group, their leaders and local authorities. Non-Gypsy persons or institutions are almost never involved, whereas we learn that earlier, in the 16th and 17th centuries, Gypsies referred to state courts and relevant officials on many occasions, representing the king or authorities in cases and disputes involving only Gypsies. This is confirmed by the letters and documents presented and analyzed in this work. It seems to be the case that royal or court authorities were also used by Gypsies. It is even more important, as it seems to follow indirectly from the mentioned letters, that there was no considerable distance between Gypsies and non-Gypsies, despite the various legal acts directed against them, and that Gypsies were not a community so closed towards contact and influence from non-Gypsies, as one might have assumed.

From Kraków, Piotr Rotemberg's route took him to the east. On May 29, 1551, he received another letter in Dynów. The author of the letter acknowledged that "Count Piotr from Egypt Minor, who is a Gypsy,"¹⁵ reported to him, asking for a certificate that he and his group are followers of the Roman Church. "The same Piotr, together with his whole gathering, received the holy body of the Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ, upon prior confession in the appropriate way and

¹⁵ Translated from Polish: "Piotr hrabia z małego Egiptu czyli Cygan."

with proper piety,”¹⁶ states the document signed by Wojciech, *commendarius*¹⁷ in Dynów, in the presence of two witnesses (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 3). We learn about the zealous religiosity of Gypsies during this period, mostly from their own stories that are aimed at better disposing city authorities towards them, as well as from the forged bishop and papal letters. The letter from Dynów shows that apart from their good behavior during their stay on someone’s property or in cities, as is mentioned in many letters, Gypsies presented themselves as zealous Christians and gave testimony to their zeal by active participation in religious practices. It should be emphasized that early evidence of Gypsies taking part in such practices is very rare.

The next letter was written two years later at the bishop’s estate in Stolzenberg-Chełm, today located within the city of Gdańsk. It is possible that the letter from Dynów, confirming the religious zeal of Piotr and his company, was helpful in finding hospitality at other church properties. All later introductory letters and certificates of good conduct come from the Prussian lands and northern Poland. It appears that Piotr Rotemberg gave up travelling the routes along the Ruthenian lands and territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as the southern and central parts of Poland, as the letter from Dynów was the last evidence of his stay there. We do not know whether he was staying in the city or rather travelling around Lesser Poland, evidence of which could be the letter issued in Dynów, and the lands of Ruthenia during the one and three quarter years after he had received the royal letter in Kraków. A piece of indirect evidence could be the three letters found in the collection that do not regard Piotr Rotemberg directly. Andrzej Tarło issued an introductory letter for Andrzej, Count of Rotemberg from Egypt Minor, on the 26th of February, 1547, at his property in Laszki, located not far away from Lwów. We learn that this Andrzej, “with his procession,”¹⁸ was staying for some time at the property of Tarło, and that there were no complaints

¹⁶ Translated from Polish: “Tenże przebywając u nas z całym swoim zgromadzeniem, święte ciało Zbawiciela, Pana naszego Jezusa Chrystusa, po uprzedniej spowiedzi w sposób właściwy i z pobożnością, jak przystoi chrześcijanom, przyjął.”

¹⁷ *Commendarius* was a deputy of a parish priest both in administrative as well as religious matters.

¹⁸ Translated from Polish: “ze swoim orszakiem.”

against him. In what follows, Tarło implores others “to show hospitality to the mentioned Count Andrzej and his procession,”¹⁹ and to allow them to depart and protect them from any possible harm “as one should act towards newcomers and pilgrims”²⁰ (*Et.-Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, p. 6).

The next letter issued to Andrzej is dated two and a half years later. Andrzej Rotemberg received it in Radynice (today Radenychi, in western Ukraine). It was issued by Andrzej Stadnicki, the starosta of Sanok, on the 13th of July, 1549. We learn from it that Andrzej Rotemberg, as it is stated by Stadnicki, “while staying for some time at my estate in Radynice and other estates in the Przemyśl county, behaved virtuously, decently and politely without any complaints from my subjects” (*Et.-Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, p. 26). The letter by Stadnicki was almost an exact copy of the letter issued by Tarło in Laszki, the difference being only the name of the place and the person issuing it. It appears that Stadnicki’s clerk could have had Tarło’s letter in front of him and copied its contents.

Andrzej Stadnicki issued another document for Andrzej Rotemberg on the same day in Radynice, which was written in Polish. There is no doubt that both texts are written by the same person; the handwriting and the form of the letters clearly point to this. All the documents discussed earlier were introductory letters, which must be the main reason why they were written in Latin, the language widely understood by secretaries of property owners and officials. The second document by Stadnicki is not an introductory letter, but rather refers to a dispute. The author acknowledges that “the noble-born Andrzej, the Gypsy of Rotemberg from Egypt Minor,”²¹ together with other Gypsies has paid 30 *grzywnas* to the people of Rodatycze, a village in his property (*Et.-Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 7). This is not a considerable sum of money, thus the wrongdoing could not have been a major one. It rather appears to be a fine for a minor offence (e.g., a brawl). At the same time, it is understandable why the document is written

¹⁹ Translated from Polish: “wspomnianego Andrzeja hrabiego z jego orszakim łaskawie przyjąć.”

²⁰ Translated from Polish: “tak jak przystoi przybyszom i pielgrzymom czynić.”

²¹ Translated from Polish: “urodzony Andrzej Cyganin z Rotembergu z Małego Egiptu.”

in Polish. It was meant for identification, in the event of any troubles, for local officials who usually did not know Latin. The incident must have been a minor one, since the cited document states very clearly that Andrzej Rotemberg “behaved virtuously and politely together with his procession”²² (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 26).

Among all the documents in the collection of acts related to the Rotembergs, only these three documents refer to Andrzej Rotemberg, and we do not know the degree of dependence or consanguinity between Piotr and Andrzej. The name of Andrzej does not appear in any of the remaining documents. I think that Piotr and Andrzej had been travelling together, but parted ways sometime between 1545 and 1547. Andrzej with his group stayed in the Lwów-Przemyśl territories, whereas Piotr travelled in the direction of Mazovia and central Poland. However, both groups most likely met again later, but it is not clear when; otherwise, the letters issued in the name of Andrzej would not have been found together with those received by Piotr. The fact that both groups must have travelled together under the leadership of Piotr before is confirmed by one significant detail. A comparison of the letters issued by Andrzej Tarło in 1547, and Andrzej Stadnicki in 1549, demonstrate that the second one was copied from the first one, as both are issued in the name of Andrzej. It is enough to compare them with the letter issued by Hieronim Lanckoroński in 1545 in Skała in Podole region to Piotr Rotemberg, to see that the letter by Tarło for Andrzej is not an original work, but was also copied. We can assume that the group led by Piotr divided into two after leaving Skała, probably still in 1545. In the next year Piotr was in Równe, where he received his letter from Duke (*kniaź*) Kurcewicz, whereas Andrzej, together with his part of the group, remained in those lands until at least 1549. Andrzej, who received from Piotr the letter issued in Skała by Lanckoroński, stayed for a longer time in the estates of Tarło and Stadnicki, in the Przemyśl and Lwów lands, where he also received introductory letters copied from the letter by Lanckoroński. At the same time, Piotr embarked on a long voyage towards Mazovia, and then travelled to the south. By the end of 1549, he had received the document in Kraków issued

²² Translated from Polish: “cnotliwie, oraz grzecznie zachował się ze swoim orszakiem.”

by the royal chancellery. Piotr wandered again from Kraków to the east, which is confirmed by the earlier mentioned document received in 1551 in Dynów, in the Sanok region. At that point, both groups probably united again, whereby both of the letters, issued for Piotr and for Andrzej, are together in the same collection.

Let us return to Piotr and the re-united groups. From Dynów they travelled towards the north. The letter issued in 1551 in Dynów is the last piece of evidence of their presence in the southern and eastern territories of the former Commonwealth. We do not know the route they took towards the north and Prussian lands, but the next trace of their presence comes from a town today lying within the territory of the city of Gdańsk. On the 5th of September, 1553, the *sołtys*²³ of Stolzenberg (Chełm), a town belonging at the time to the Wrocław bishopric, issued a sort of a pass, which stated: “I have allowed Piotr the Gypsy together with his companions to pass towards Subkowie,” a town that was also property of the Wrocław bishopric (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 13; DOC. 3). The *sołtys* also acknowledges in the letter that “nobody was harmed and there were no complaints against these Gypsies”²⁴ (*ibid.*).

Equipped with the letter from the *sołtys* of Stolzenberg, the group most likely went on to Subkowie, but they could not have stayed there long because by mid-October they already were in Malbork, one of the most important Prussian cities. The distance from Subkowie to Malbork is just 25 km. We do not know from the letter how long they stayed there, or what they were doing there.

The letter that they received in Malbork informs us about the planned route of their future travel. However, what is more important is the fact that for the first time we get an idea about the size of the group. “Some Gypsies who arrived reported to me, and I allowed them, together with their wives, six couples in total, to pass through my starostwo in Puck freely and safely,” acknowledges Stanisław Kostka, voivode of Chełm in the letter issued on the 16th of October, 1553, in Malbork (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 9). Six couples, or six families,

²³ *Sołtys* was a head of town or village.—Trans.

²⁴ Translated from polish: “nikt nie został skrzywdzony i nie przyszło do żadnej skargi przeciwko tym Cyganom.”

together with children, would comprise a group of about twenty-five to thirty people. This was not such a large group, but travelling in a larger group would probably make obtaining permission to stay more difficult, not to mention ensuring their livelihood, whereas a smaller group would not ensure their safety against possible assaults or conflicts with local residents. Similarly to the previous one, this document is also written in German. At the same time, we can be assured that the wandering of Piotr's group was not accidental roaming. He and his people must have had a good grasp of geography, since they could plan the route of their wandering so precisely.

It is certain that after travelling towards Puck, Piotr with his "subjects" must have gone back to Gdańsk and Tczew. In late spring he visited the bishop's property in Subkowie once again. On the 24th of May, 1555, the starosta of Subkowie, Kasper Twardowski, issued him a document, written in Polish, that certified that "they behaved well and virtuously" (*Et.—Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 5; DOC. 4). It is also probable that during their stay somebody lost a horse (and it was always easy to accuse the newcomers) and that there must have been an investigation, because in Starosta Twardowski's document, we find the following sentence: "with regard to the horse that was lost in Subkowice, it has become clear that it was not because of his group that it was lost, since it was found at some other people's place"²⁵ (*ibid.*). Piotr's group must have felt safe here, since they soon came to Subkowie again.

Next, Piotr headed south. The next letter he received was in Lipno, which is more than 150 km from Subkowie. The city mayor and councillors issued Piotr a letter dated on the 21st of December, 1556; thus, more than a year and a half had elapsed since their stay in Subkowie. Most likely between Subkowie and Lipno, Piotr and his company visited different cities and stayed there for shorter or longer periods of time. Travelling from Subkowie to Lipno, Piotr's group had to cross the Vistula River. At this section the river is deep and wide, so getting to the other side could not have been easy. Piotr and his group did not take the simplest route to Lipno. It is likely that, as before, they were

²⁵ Translated from Polish: "o tego konia który był zginął w Sobkowych, i okazało się to jasno, że nie przeszedł jego rotę był zginął, bo się u innych ludzi znalazł."

staying in different properties for shorter or longer periods of time. It is almost certain that they spent some time in Toruń.

In Lipno the document was issued on the last day of 1556, which means that Piotr and his group spent the winter in that city. We do not know what they did for a living, but certainly they were not people on the margins of society. On the contrary, they must have been rather well-off, since their stay was accepted by the city authorities. This can be indirectly inferred from the letter, its contents, and the way Piotr is represented in it. The city mayor and city councillors acknowledge that they were paid a visit by “the brave man Piotr Rotemberg from Egypt Minor, Philistine with his company worthy of trust” (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 25). From what follows we learn about internal problems of Piotr’s group. It is likely that another Gypsy had come to Lipno. According to the letter of the city mayor and councillors, “Marcin, or Thaik in Philistine, during his short stay in our city Lipno, deserted his wife, whom he had married according to the rites of the Roman Church, and left her with the group of the mentioned Piotr and then ran away in the night together with another women named Anna, of the same origin, called Pulana in Philistine.”²⁶ Piotr also accuses Marcin-Thaik and Anna-Pulana of owing money to him and his son, Jan (information about Piotr’s son appears in these documents for the first time). The authorities of Lipno ask voivodes, starostas, castellans, *sołtyses*, and other officials of various ranks in all lands of the Polish Kingdom to offer assistance to Piotr in capturing and punishing the fugitives.

The presence of Gypsy names in old documents is extremely rare. That is why the fact that we find them here, in the acts related to Piotr of Rotemberg, dating from mid-16th century, is remarkable. Gypsies had started to adopt surnames in the manner of the local people. The wandering Gypsies often travelled to distant places and the surnames they used sometimes allow us to locate the places where they had originally come from, or had stayed for a longer time, as

²⁶ Translated from Polish: “imieniem Marcin, po filistyńsku Thaik, w naszym mieście Lipnie gdy pozostawał przez krótki czas małżonkę swoją własną, według obrzędu Kościoła Rzymskiego pojętą, oddalił i pozostawił przy grupie wspomnianego męża Piotra Rotemberka i z inną niewiastą, imieniem Anna, tegoż pochodzenia, po filistyńsku Pulana, uciekł nocą.”

well as their belonging to a group. On the other hand, Gypsy names do not give us an opportunity to even vaguely predict the place of their previous stay, or the place of their temporary home country, because they are formed on the basis of colloquial words, names of things, animals, or features. In fact, they are closer to nicknames. The Gypsy name mentioned in this document is *Thaik*. We cannot be certain that it was written precisely as it was pronounced. Besides, as with other languages, the Gypsy languages permuted, and contemporary vocabulary can be very different from the old one. There is no such word in dictionaries of any of the several central or south European dialects. There is a word “*thalik*” or “*talik*” both in the dialect of the Polish Roma, and in the dialects of the Carpathian Gypsies, as well as those used in Germany, Russia and the Balkan countries. The word means outerwear, a long coat, or an overcoat (Ficowski 1985, 407; Sergijevskij and Barannikov 1938, 135; Sarău 1992, 159; Uhlik 1983, 125; Wolf 1960, 221). We do not know whether such a name as *Marcin-Thaik* existed, but it is possible, since it would be sufficient for him to have had that type of outer wear in order to be called such a name. The name of the woman is *Pulana*. In many dialects, there is a word “*purano*,” and in all dialects it means the same, old, aged, or advanced in years. While “*purani*” or “*puranji*” means the same in reference to a woman, i.e., old, aged, or advanced in years (Rozwadowski 1936, 55; Sergijevskij and Barannikov 1938, 110; Uhlik 1983, 357; Wolf 1960, 188). Although *Marcin-Thaik* left his wife for *Anna-Pulana*, it does not mean that she was necessarily a young maid. Neither does it mean that she was old, since her name could have simply reflected some feature of her character. We should also keep in mind that Gypsy names did not sound familiar to the author of the document, so misspelling was likely.

Half a year later, Piotr arrived in *Czarnków*, about 200 km to the west of *Lipno*. A document issued by a local landlord tells us that Piotr, a knight from Egypt Minor, stayed with his group for a longer time in *Czarnków*, conducted himself well, and that there were no complaints about him (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 22). A month later, part of his group was already in *Więcbork*, 100 km to the northeast of *Czarnków*. The heir of *Więcbork*, *Mikołaj Zebrzydowski*, issued a certificate of good conduct for Jan the Gypsy with his company *Et.–Min.*, 110 b,

Nr 3, 8). We do not know why Piotr's son, Jan arrived in Więcbork (Jan is known to us from the Lipno document). It is likely that Piotr stayed in one of the places along the route for a while longer, or visited other places. Yet in the second quarter of 1559, Jan was travelling together with his father between Tczew and Gdańsk, which is confirmed by three documents issued within a short period of time in the same year.

The following documents appear to be further evidence of conflicts in Piotr's group. The flight of Marcin-Thaik with Anna-Pulana was not the only such incident. Others fled from Piotr's group, and he tried to restrain them with the help of local authorities. We have no way of finding out whether the accusations regarding the financial liabilities towards Piotr mentioned in the documents were real or not. The documents demonstrate that the financial situation of the group was deteriorating, which was followed by a decrease in its prestige. Nowhere during the following years is Piotr Rotemberg referred to as count, and only once the term "noble" is used in reference to him. Furthermore, the penitential character of their wandering or pilgrimage is mentioned nowhere. In some documents even the surname is not used. He is simply "Piotr the Gypsy" and not von Rotemberg, or simply Rotemberg. Gradually, Piotr's group starts to remind us of the wandering gatherings that we know from 19th-century depictions.

From Czarnków through Więcbork, Piotr and his group travelled in the direction of Gdańsk. We do not know where they spent the next winter, but by the end of the spring of 1559, they were again in Subkowe, a place where they had already been hosted several times. On the 1st of May, they received permission for continuing their travels. Jan Magnuszewski, the starosta of Subkowe, issued a document, which tells us much about Piotr's group. The letter says, "Philistines, hetman Piotr with his son Jan and other Philistines came to me and asked for the liberty to stay in Sopkowie. We, seeing their poverty and destitution, granted them the liberty to stay in Szkoty near Gdańsk for some time"²⁷ (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 16). From the letter

²⁷ Translated from Polish: "przybyli do mnie Filistyni, Piotr hetman ze swoim synem Janem i z innymi Filistynami i prosili o wolność przebywania w Sopkowych. My, widząc ich biedę i nędzę daliśmy im wolność przebywania w Szkotach koło Gdańska przez pewien czas."

by Magnuszewski, we learn about the visible social degradation of the group. Piotr is no longer either a count or even a knight, but just a hetman, the elder of the group and its leader. Magnuszewski granted them permission to stay not because he saw within them people fulfilling the Pope's orders, but because he "sees their poverty and destitution." The following fragment of the document distinctly refers to the financial situation and internal conflicts within the group: "It happened that at night several Philistines ran away from them and took away from them many things, that is gold and silver."²⁸ The document goes on to enumerate the runaways' names and the sums of money that they owe to Piotr. The runaways also took a horse. The author of the document asks officials of various ranks for help in capturing the fugitives. Jan Magnuszewski also issued a document with the same contents, but in Polish, which most probably was meant for identification for officials who did not know Latin well enough (*Et.-Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 19).

Also of interest is the fact that after years of wandering in the territories of the Commonwealth, Piotr's group seems to have undergone a process of Polonization and peasantification, and not just an external one. The name Rotemberg does not appear in the later documents and Piotr is sometimes just a Gypsy, which is how the Polish documents refer to him.

At the beginning of June in the same year, the group arrived in Tczew. This is confirmed in a document issued by the city mayor and councillors of Tczew on the 7th of June. The contents of the letter are not clear. It appears that Piotr Rotemberg found his fugitives and a certain settlement was made before the city and court authorities. The Gypsies mentioned by name testify what sums of money they owe to Piotr, and they commit to staying with Piotr and to repaying their debts towards him as well as to not testifying against him (*Et.-Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 27–28). The contents of the letter are somewhat confused, but it is clear that a considerable effort is necessary for Piotr to rein in his companions. He seems to be beset with problems. In the autumn of the same year several people ran away from his group again.

²⁸ Translated from Polish: "Zdarzyło się, że nocą uciekło od nich kilku Filistynów i wzięli im wiele rzeczy, to jest złoto i srebro."

From Tczew, Piotr Rotemberg, together with his group, headed to the southwest, towards Starogard Gdański, and in September they arrived in Sucumin, a place about 10 km to the west from Starogard. Here, they stayed for about a dozen days with the permission of the heir of Sucumin. Yet here again, several of his subjects ran away. Piotr asked the heir for assistance and received a document issued in his name on the 25th of September, 1559. Jerzy Reyngeling von Peysnicz, the heir of Sucumin, acknowledged that he had “allowed Piotr, the elder of the Gypsies, to build their camp and stay there for some time. During that time, at night, two Gypsies ran away with their wives and children. They were named Hans Gungi, with his father Asmus Pryncz, and Anna Orsache, one of his daughters”²⁹ (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 18; DOC. 5). Conflicts within the group at that time appear to have been serious, as this was the fourth flight of Piotr’s subjects. Furthermore, this time one of his daughters ran away as well. It seems that Piotr was losing his authority, since once again, a case of runaways, after the capture of the previous ones, needed to be referred to a local representative of civic law. The letter says, “I insistently ask any trustworthy person of any rank not to hinder Piotr from bringing those fugitives before me for trial, but rather to be of assistance in this case of fugitives” (*ibid.*).

Our attention is drawn to the surnames of Gypsies. We do not know why they are so different; however, it is important to note that during those times, peasants and serfs had only first names, while surnames or family names were given to people of higher ranks. Thus, it is likely that having surnames was the only way of improving the social standing of Gypsies by convincing others that they were indeed descendants of a noble-born, or at least free people, and that their wandering and poverty were only the result of the sin committed long ago by their ancestors.

In the letter issued by the heir of Sucumin, we find for the first time, information that Piotr camped out with a *tabor*. This is not a

²⁹ Translated from Polish: “stwierdza, że zezwolił Piotrowi, starszemu Cyganów obozować przez pewien czas razem z jego taborem, w tymże czasie, w porze snu nocnego, uciekli mu dwaj Cyganie z żonami i z dziećmi, którzy nazywają się: Hans Gungi razem ze swoim ojcem Asmusem Pryncz oraz Anna Orsache, jedna z jego córek.”

very precise term, yet we can assume that for the period of their stay they built a camp, put up tents outside the territory of the village or buildings, and surrounded them with carts. Until the 18th century, the word “*tabor*” meant a camp surrounded by carts in order to ensure safety, and most likely the author of the letter used this word with this meaning. From earlier documents, we know that Piotr’s group often changed the place of their stay, but we do not know how they travelled, and how they moved their children or their possessions. Only once, from the act issued in Tczew, do we learn that the runaways took a horse with them. Also before that, still in the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Ruthenian lands, they were going to fairs where horses were traded. This is not enough for us to conjecture what the movement of Piotr’s group looked like. Yet, the very fact that they covered considerable territories indicates that they travelled on horses, or at least carried their possessions and children on horses, even if the adults walked on foot. The letter from Sucumin may indicate that Gypsies used carts in their travels at the time. These were not inhabitable carts, but *tabor* carts, used for the transportation of possessions and persons and for providing protection to the pitched tents.

About a month later, Piotr’s group arrived in Elganów, about 30 km from Sucumin in the direction of Gdańsk. Evidently, the autumnal period forced Piotr to travel and stay on the bishop estates in Gdańsk for the winter. In Elganów, the internal problems of the group come to the surface again. Once again, another couple ran away during the night: Barbara Dzyrkye and Marcin Gogli, whom we know from the previous case, were put before the Tczew councillors, as well as other two men. The runaways took two horses with them, probably apart from their own possessions. The owner of the landed property in Elganów issued Piotr a document aimed at helping him capture them (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 10). It seems that for some time, Piotr had a greater need for fugitive warrants to help him in preserving order and managing the other members of the group, rather than for introductory letters. The document issued on the 18th of October, 1559, also states that “Philistines have come to us, one Peter from Rotenberg, master and supervisor of the Gypsies, with his son Jan and his company, asking us for permission to stay freely in our village of

Elganowo. We, upon seeing that the request is legitimate, according to the order of his Majesty our Polish King, have granted them free stay for a certain time”³⁰ (ibid.).

We do not know on what basis the author of the document deems granting a stay to Piotr’s group as fulfilling the king’s will. No document, neither a Sejm resolution nor a royal chancellery act, that would legitimize such a statement is known. On the contrary, the Sejm had ruled that Gypsies should be expelled from Poland. The act of Sigismund Augustus, received by Piotr in Kraków almost 10 years earlier, on the 25th of October, 1549, did not mention anything about the King’s will regarding welcoming Gypsies on private property.

We do not know how the conflict in the group and the case of the four runaways with two horses ended. Piotr travelled further on and likely spent the winter in Szkoty. They probably decided to spend the winter in smaller groups. Jan, his son known to us from the previous documents, probably left the group with several other people and travelled to the west, in the direction of Żuków, where there was a Norbertine convent and convent properties. On the basis of the analysis of the earlier acts referring to Piotr Rotemberg, it appears that he felt best on church properties, those of bishops or monasteries. The fact that Jan left the group, leading a group of his own, does not indicate him becoming independent. There are earlier instances of Jan leaving with part of Piotr’s group, but after some time, both groups always reunited. Also in this case, Jan’s departure is more likely related to the winter period, since forming gatherings too large would make survival during winter more difficult, as well as conflicts with local residents more likely.

On the 23rd of January, 1560, Marcin Vekeley, the *wójt* of Żuków, issued an introductory letter for Jan, asking that he be welcomed at properties. The *wójt* of Żuków issued him a very positive opinion: “I, Marcin Vekeley, the *wójt* of Żuków make it known in my letter that noble Jan Reuttenbarck [/], the elder of a group of Gypsies, with his

³⁰ Translated from Polish: “przybyli do nas Felistyni, to jest Piotr z Rotenberku, pan i przełożony Cyganów, z synem swoim Janem i z towarzystwem swoim, prosząc o swobodne pozostanie we wsi naszej Elganowo. My przeto, widząc, że prośba ich jest słuszna, według polecenia najjaśniejszego króla naszego polskiego daliśmy im wolne przebywanie przez pewien czas.”

people behaved modestly and honestly at the covenant properties in Żuków and one cannot say anything else about them other than that they are honesty itself”³¹ (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 15). It must have been an early spring that year, or perhaps the winter had been exceptionally mild, since Jan had planned his further journey. After all, that must have been his goal, since he had asked for the introductory letter before the end of January. Such an early departure from Żuków was not caused by animosity towards them, as the tone of the letter is clearly welcoming, so there must have been some other reasons for Jan to leave.

We have no news of what was happening with Piotr, Jan, and the rest of their group for the next year and a half. The next preserved document is an introductory letter and good conduct certificate issued for Jan, the son of Peter, in Wąbrzeźno. On the 6th of June, 1561, *burgrabia* (count) Stanisław Kurzątkowski acknowledged that Jan the Gypsy, the son of Piotr of Rotemberg, stayed in Wąbrzeźno for two weeks at the bishop of Chełm’s property, and that he and other Gypsies behaved well and virtuously, and that there were no complaints lodged against them from any of the bishop’s subjects (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 20). Then Kurzątkowski asked that the group be welcomed should they arrive at anybody’s property. Jan probably proved his identity with one of the letters issued in the name of his father, since it is emphasized in the document that he is the son of Piotr. We do not know what Piotr was doing during this period, whereas the next letter indicates that they are already together.

The next document is an act received by Piotr far away from Elganów, in Rehden (today Radzyń Chełmiński in Poland) on the 23rd of June, 1561. It also certifies the good conduct of Piotr and his son, together with the group of Gypsies, during their stay in Rehden. Starosta von Dameraw (Dąbrowski) acknowledged that Piotr, with his son and his group of Gypsies, “stayed for several weeks in my starostwo. Their conduct was very proper and no complaints were

³¹ Translated from Polish: “Ja, Marcin Vekeley, wójt w Żukowie czynię wiadomym tym moim listem, że szlachetny Jan Reuttenbarck [/], starszy grupy Cyganów ze swoimi ludźmi zachowywał się skromnie i uczciwie w okolicznych dobrach klasztoru w Żukowie i nic inaczej nie można o nich powiedzieć, że jest w nich cała uczciwość.”

lodged against them by my subjects in relation to their staying in the neighborhood”³² (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 24).

The tone of the last letter in this collection is similar. The letter was issued in Bratian, a village belonging to the royal property owned by the Działyńskis. The distance between Radzyn Chełmiński to Bratian is about 70 km, and a few kilometres less from Wąbrzeźno. The letter is issued by the voivode of Chełm and the landlord of Bratian, Jan Działyński, and is dated the 15th of August, 1561. The letter says more about their good conduct, as such letters usually do, about respecting their duties, and good relations with others. The evidence for their good behavior is the lack of complaints against them. We do not know how and whether or not Piotr finally managed to settle the conflicts within his group. It appears that his authority over the group had weakened, just as the group itself did. Indirect evidence for this is a phrase in the concluding sentences of the letter, where Działyński asks that he be protected “from other Gypsy groups”³³ (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 12).

In the autumn of 1561, as we can see, Piotr was northbound again. Before the winter he had most likely travelled to places known to, and well-disposed towards, him and his group. The region of Gdańsk was undoubtedly the area most often visited by Piotr. More distant travels, to the Lithuanian and Ukrainian lands, took place only during the early part of his stay in the Commonwealth. After Bratian, we find no more traces Piotr and his group. We know nothing about him, his son's and his group's future. Maybe Piotr died; after all, 19 years had elapsed between the first issued letter in 1542 and the last one in Bratian.

A question that remains is how the collection of letters appeared in the archive. Maybe Piotr undertook his last voyage towards the northeast, to the eastern part of Prussia and so-called Lithuania Minor. The Sejm resolutions and legislation unfavorable towards the Gypsies could have encouraged Piotr to look for calmer places,

³² Translated from Polish: “zatrzymał się kilka tygodni tu w moim starostwie. Ponieważ zachowywali się tak należycie, że nie wpłynęła przeciwko nim żadna skarga od moich poddanych ze względu na ich sąsiedztwo w tym czasie.”

³³ Translated from Polish: “aby bronili ich od innych grup Cyganów.”

and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania provided such opportunities. It is likely that the group settled on the Radziwiłł's property, and he died there. In this way, the letters got into the hands of someone who could see their exceptionality, and with time they were brought to the archive in Königsberg.

There are twenty-five documents referring to Piotr, spanning a 20-year period, coming from the territory of the Baltic seaside and Gdańsk, the modern Lithuania-Latvia border, and from as far away as the Zbruch River in the south of Ukraine. These documents do not say much about Piotr Rotemberg and his group. However, an analysis of the entire collection provides some knowledge. As almost all source material related to Gypsies, this collection shows this community from the non-Gypsy perspective and through the eyes of non-Gypsies. Unfortunately, Gypsies themselves did not write chronicles and did not record their observations and perceptions. For this reason, we can make assumptions about the attitude of Gypsies regarding the non-Gypsy world on only to a very limited extent.

Piotr and his group are an exceptional phenomenon in the history of Gypsies in Poland. From the chronicles of different European countries, we know that Gypsies had used papal letters, even though they were not authentic. We also know the stories they were telling in order to win the support of the authorities and people. Knowledge about them and the nature of their travels came much later; initially, with the help of literature on the subject which was known only to a limited circle of people.

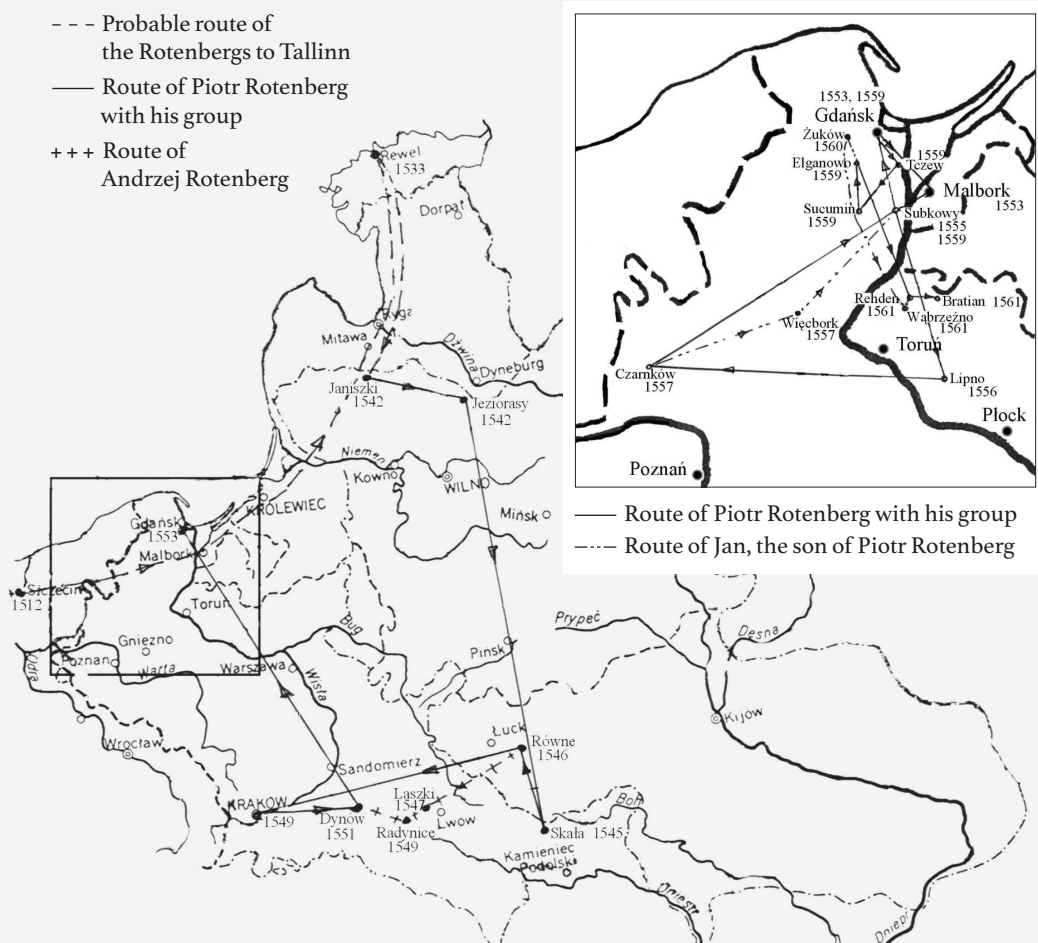
The examination of documents in the Königsberg archive provides information about the changes in these wandering groups. They also say quite a bit about the relations with the local population, and reflect changes with regard to the attitude towards Gypsies. The difference in tone of the acts from the 40s and the 50s is evident, but more clear is the difference in the tone of letters issued in the eastern parts of the Commonwealth, in comparison to those issued in Prussian cities.

The letter issued by the archbishop of Lyon, even if it was a forgery, appeared to have been very effective in opening doors, and there is ample evidence that until the mid-century, it had helped the Gypsies from Piotr's group to win support. According to the documents, the

crucial time regarding attitudes towards Gypsies was the period between 1551 and 1553. Until May 1551, when Piotr received a letter in Dynów, all documents refer to Gypsies as newcomers from Egypt Minor. The majority emphasize that the nature of their wandering is a religious one, and that it was the fulfilment of the penance imposed by the pope, a form of atonement for the sins of their ancestors who had rejected the Christian faith. Only two letters from this period do not refer to the reason for their wandering. One of them is the letter of Sigismund Augustus, issued in Kraków, because it is a “wanted” warrant for those who had attacked Piotr and his group, and at the same time, a safe passage document allowing Piotr to seek justice and use the help of local officials in capturing those who had harmed him. The second is the letter issued in Dynów, which does not refer to their pilgrimage, but is nevertheless a certificate of their Catholic faith. In Janiszki and Jeziorasy, Piotr is referred to as a “Philistine,” later he is titled a “count from Egypt Minor.” We can assume that the way the members of the group dressed, travelled and looked, helped to authenticate their position and role that Piotr aspired to.

The mid-fifties of the 16th century marked a period of a clear change in the appearance and status of Piotr and his subjects. After they had travelled from Dynów to the north and arrived near Tczew and Gdańsk, not even once did the title of count appear, nor was their pilgrimage mentioned. It seems that the attitude towards Gypsies was different here, although not exactly hostile. Piotr was receiving letters written in a well-disposed tone. We do not know anything about ill-disposed ones, although this does not mean they did not exist. From 1553–1561, he was called “noble” only twice in the remaining 13 documents. Piotr is a “hetman,” “famous,” but most often simply “the elder” or “the Gypsy.” The degradation and lowering of social esteem is obvious. Only in the documents from Subkowie, Lipno and Czarnków is Egypt Minor mentioned. Later, not a single one of the last ten letters refers to Egypt. This is mentioned for the last time in the act issued in Czarnków. There, Piotr is still a noble knight from Egypt Minor. The letter was issued in mid-June, 1557. Several months earlier, in January of the same year, the Sejm in Warsaw adopted the decision to expel Gypsies from Poland and to ban their shelter in the future (see Chapter 4). At the time, the Sejm resolution had

been entered into the acts of different cities, but more time had to pass before the information reached regional authorities and more distant regions. Whether the resolution of the Warsaw Sejm had an impact on the attitude towards Gypsies, and to what extent, is hard to know, but the fact that after 1557 the tone of the letters changed so fundamentally, is no mere coincidence. Not a single letter encouraged people to give things to Gypsies, spoke of their special mission imposed by the pope, or mentioned their home country, Egypt, which they allegedly left. This could have led to the impoverishment of Piotr's group, which also would have had an impact on its internal situation and conflicts. The documents issued after 1557 are either introductory letters, certifying their good conduct or "wanted" warrants for those who had fled Piotr's leadership. The year 1557, the date of the resolution against Gypsies by the Warsaw Sejm, appears to be a clear *caesura*. Afterwards, Piotr's group became impoverished, the attitude towards them, as well as their status and financial situation changed, and the group lost its dynamism. The strong impact of the local language and culture also becomes much more evident.



DOCUMENTS

Martinus Stanislawowicz viceroy in rezorosi districtus
 a reuerendi^o in xpo p^{re} et d^{omi}no d^{omi}no paulo d^{omi}no asamensis
 Deigra epo vulnen Magnifico generosis strenuis Nobilibz
 famatis ac circumspectis palatibz capitaneis baronibz v^{ice}
 capitaneis p^{ro}sulibz g^{er}ulibz et eoz v^{ice}geren^{ti} domibz et
 amicis charissimis Magnifici generosi nobiles famati
 ac circumspecti d^{omi}ni ac amici charissimi Notu facio domiⁿ
 aionibz v^{ost}ris quia id petrus retemberg philistinus de
 minori Egipto vna cum alijs sorijs suis d^{omi}n^{is} in d^{omi}n^{is}
 tenentibz bonoz regie m^{ar}e bene proba sperant ac vir
 tuose inter incolabz et subditos se g^{er}erant nulla d^{omi}na
 zisdom subditis ac incolis inferen^{ti} Ideo v^{ost}ras d^{omi}n^{is} pro illo
 p^{re}tor ac rogo velint eundez cu^m ip^{si}us Comitina ad
 Domina et tenentat dominationu^m v^{ost}raz ubi venerint
 suscipere et c^{on}seruare qui se p^{re}dicent ac submitut in
 zisdom dominijs et tenentis inter subditos d^{omi}n^{is} v^{ost}raz
 bene probe ac f^{er}uac^{ite} c^{on}seruare pro ut d^{omi}net v^{ost}ros
 si vero aliqua in iurias ab aliquo ip^{si}us attingisset p^{er}u
 pere q^{ui}des v^{ost}re d^{omi}n^{is} pro deo tuari ac defendi velint
 Nam ut fama apud omes her est q^{uod} p^{er} p^{re}sentu^m p^{re}toru^m
 suoz penitencia^m expleat illis q^{ui} in d^{omi}n^{is} auxilio ad
 esse Tandem bene valete h^{ab}z testimonio v^{ost}raz fig^{ur}
 l^{it}er meuz est ap^{er}sentur Datur in rezorosi feria se
 ta ante dominicaz rogationuz anno cu^m nato 1542

DOC. 1 · 12.05.1542, Jeziorosy. Marcin Stanisławycz, the viceroy of the landed property in Jeziorosy in Braślaw powiat, testifies that the group of Gypsies led by Piotr Rotemberg conducted themselves decently during their stay in that property and asks others to provide shelter to these Gypsies.

Etats—Ministerium, IIO b, No 3, p. 4 [GStAPK; APO: S—Film 5468]

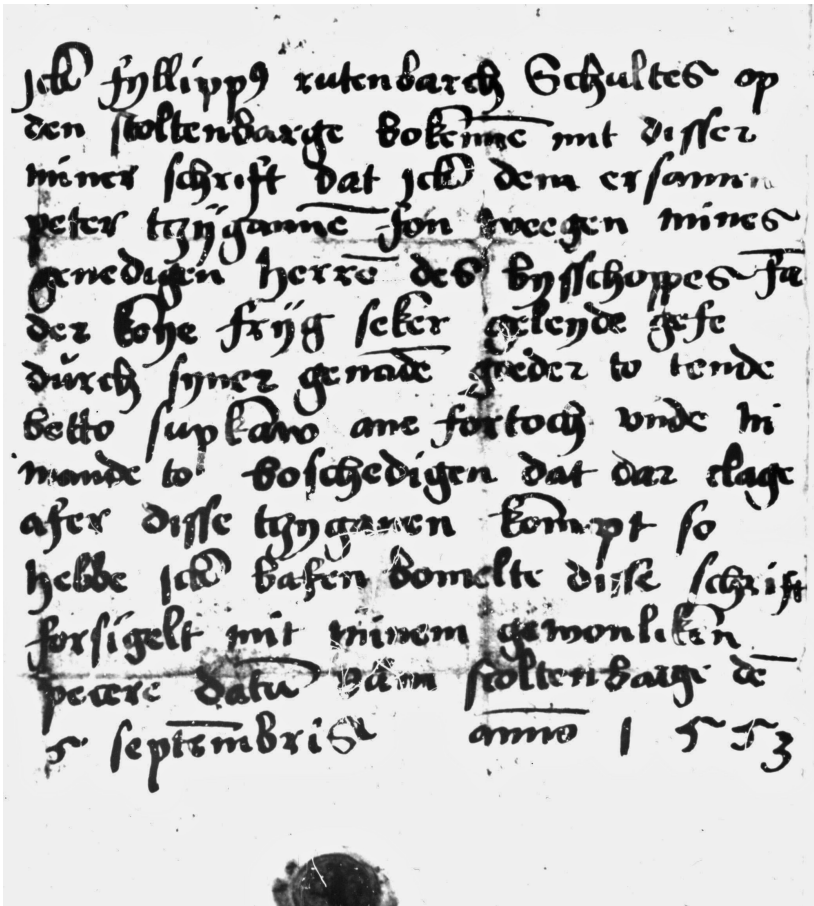
[Photo - Rozdz. 3 dok. 1.jpg]

Sigismundus Augustus Dei gratia Rex Polonie magnus dux
 Prælie Rusiæ Prusie Masouie Samogitie etc. dominus et heres
 Vinetie & smigale Palatinus Castellanus Capitaneus Terrarum Locumtenens Dignitarius officialibus
 Vicecapitaneus Procuratoribus Procuratoribus Consiliis Advocatis Scabimis et ceteris quibuscuq; tenore præ
 sentium requirem. Mandatis nostris sincere et fidelibus nobis dilectis gratiam maiorem Dequam. Sincere et fideles
 nobis dilecti. Expositum est coram nobis nomine Nobilis Petri de Rosenberg Militis de minori Egipto gra
 ui in querela contra Nobilem Petrum de Crissenberg et filios eiusdem. necnon nepotem eius ex fratre Georgium
 ac suos casumque quod proficiat eo per viam publicam in Ducatu Masouie vni cum ceteris hostili
 ter inuaderet. Nos accepit. et Comes sexus vniuersi abduxit. Supplicatumq; nobis est
 ut illi de rebus suis restituere dignemur. Quapropter. Nos cum cuius inq; tribui volen
 s. et p. vris mandatis habere omnino volen. ut vbiq; prefatos Injusticia. res suas ipse Petrus de Rosen
 berg affecutus fuerit. eas. S. et P. vris defulerit cum ipsius iusticia sibi debita et celere iure hospitum
 ministris et ministrari curis. Dilationibus quibusvis iuri contrariis. remotione ac sicubi auxilio ad
 hos incedendos. comprehendedos. aut arrestandos. vel ad parandum iuri. mandatumq; solucum. cogendos egue
 rit. illi omni modo. via et ratione adsint. Alii non facturi pro officio suo et gratia nostra. Datis Crac. xxv
 Octobris. Anno domini M. D. Xlix. Regni vero nostri D. D.

Et mandatum Sacre
 Regie prout

DOC. 2 · 25. 10. 1549, Kraków. King Sigismund Augustus issued a *universal* (act) in which he asks Piotr Rotemberg, the Gypsy group leader, for help in pursuing the perpetrators of the robbery.

Etats-Ministerium, IIo b, No 3, p. 28 [GStAPK; APO: S-Film 5468]



Ich philipp⁹ rutenbarch Schultes op
 den stoltendarge bokeme mit disser
 minez schrift dat ich dem erfarnen
 peter tyngharne jon weegen mines
 gnedigen herre des byschoppes fa
 der lohe fr^{ij}g seker gelende gese
 durch syner genade geder to tende
 selto sup^lano ane fortoch unde in
 mande to beschedigen dat dar elag
 afer disse tyngharen kompt so
 hebbe ich baken bemelt disse schrift
 forsigelt mit minem gemonliken
 peere datu nam stoltendarge de
 5 septembri⁸ anno 1 553

DOC. 3 · 05. 09. 1553. Filip Rutenbarch, the bishop *sołtyś* in Stoltenberg, testifies that the group of Gypsies led by Piotr Rotemberg conducted themselves decently during their wandering towards Subkowy.

Etats-Ministerium, 110 b, No 3, p. 13 [GStAPK; APO: S-Film 5468]

Kasper Twardowski, Starosta Subkowski, wyśnawam tym
 moym piśmym, Pęd wam wpiśmym, Kęsem kolow
 bendie ten list wkaż, aby im w m. dany w tym
 warte, Sławetnemu Lętom. I Rotemburku, Inatego
 Lęptu, iż sje dobre cnotliwie sprawili, ożego
 konia kęsem był Lęgal w Sobkowach, jekajale sje
 to jęstnie, Ie nęgrę sje rożte był Lęgal,
 bo sje v jęstnie sje nęgrę, dęst ja w jęstne.
 wam jęstne wam nęstnie jęst Lęst, swiadostwo
 onim iż sje dobre jęstowal i w jęst nęst
 jęst nęst w jęst, dęst jęst w jęst nęst
 jęst swa jęst jęst w jęst w Sobkowach dęst
 nęst dęst dęst. 1. 5. 5. 5

Jęst nęst nęst

DOC. 4 · 24. 05. 1555, Subkowy. Kasper Twardowski, the bishop starosta, testifies that the group of Gypsies led by Piotr Rotemberg did not steal the horse in Subkowy that disappeared during their stay there.

Etats-Ministerium, 110 b, Nr 3, p. 5 [GStAPK; APO: S-Film 5468]

[illegible]

DOC. 5 - 25.09.1559, Súcumin. Jerzy Pisiński, member of the Tczew court jury, asks Piotr Furstenber [!] for help in taking the fugitive Gypsies: Hans Gungy, Asmus Pryncz, and Anna Orsache to the municipal court.

Etats-Ministerium, II O b, No 3, p. 18 [GStAPK; APO: S-Film 5468]

“That there should be no Gypsies in the Crown”¹—Times of Repressions

The opinion that the arrival of Gypsies in the beginning of the 15th century, up until the mid-16th century, was a period of goodwill towards them, is repeated by nearly all scholars of the history of Gypsies in Poland. The fundamental evidence confirming this belief, albeit indirect, is the fact that we do not know of any document from this period that was against Gypsies. However, no author sharing this opinion can present any proof that would indeed confirm the prevalence of positive attitudes towards Gypsies.

The previous chapters allow us to partially understand this state of affairs, or that of positive attitudes towards Gypsies. The way of life of the earliest Gypsy arrivals was not so different from the way of life of non-Gypsies. They did not form gatherings, groups, or communities that could be deemed provocative because of their difference. It appears that only the arrival of wandering groups started to breed animosity and rejection. This process coincided with the changes occurring in the mentality of Europeans at the time. The migration of Gypsies was most likely the result of repressions against them in the countries of Central and Western Europe. The change of attitudes towards Gypsies in Poland—animosity towards them and later the legislation enacted against them—evidently coincided with the arrival of groups fleeing from countries to the west of the Polish Kingdom. The mid-16th century marks the beginning of the period when state institutions started to regulate the situation of Gypsies in the Commonwealth, finding its reflection in the adoption of various legal acts.

¹ Translated from Polish: “Cyganie żeby w Koronie nie byli.”

The scarcity of knowledge regarding mutual relations, as well as the position of Gypsies amongst other inhabitants of the country, demonstrates the extent to which archival research regarding Gypsies has been neglected. As a result of my archival research, I have managed to find several records from the first half of the 16th century—court acts as well as introductory letters—which demonstrate that the attitude towards Gypsies was not hostile, and that it depended on the situation and not on one's belonging to a specific ethnic group and its way of life. Furthermore, the source materials from the second part of the 16th century contain not only legal acts and evidence of actions against Gypsies, but also documents demonstrating good mutual relations and various forms of cooperation. Thus, we cannot treat this period exclusively as a time of repressions and intolerance towards Gypsies, although the acts adopted against them by the sejms indicate a rather negative attitude of the authorities.

New intellectual currents and tendencies reached Poland with a certain delay, but they fundamentally changed the attitude towards people of the road, including Gypsies. Similarly to the situation in Western Europe, there were attempts to settle the issue of vagrants and beggars by expelling them, or at least partially by registering them, legitimizing in this way their presence as well as their occupation. A signal of these changes is the Sejm resolution of 1510. It says that "loose people" who, upon arrival to a city, do not occupy themselves with a craft or undertake service within three days, will be captured and, according to the law on healthy people evading work and begging, exploited in fortification works. This law, however, predominantly referred to vagrant runaway peasants (*Volumina...*, t. I, 1859, 177). It would be another forty years before state institutions started to take up the issue of Gypsies in particular.

According to Czacki, in January 1553, Chancellor Ocieski sent a letter to the authorities in Vienna, where he proposed to simultaneously expel Gypsies from Poland, Czechia, and Czech Silesia, in response to many complaints against them and conflicts at the borderland territories (Czacki, t. III, 1845, 300). This may be related to the evident intensification of legal and law-enforcement actions and repressions against Gypsies in many European countries, including those under the sovereignty of the Emperor (Czechia, Hungary, the

German lands, Austria). The Commonwealth was a likely destination to seek refuge, and even more so, since there were no local laws as yet regulating Gypsies. The considerable increase of documents referring to Gypsies is almost certainly evidence of the increase of their number in the country.

Twenty years later, the *Leges seu statuta ac privilegia Regni Poloniae* by Jakub Przyłuski was published. It is a work that not only registers the author's own perceptions of Gypsies, but also, at least to some extent, reflects the general level of knowledge and social emotions regarding Gypsies. It is also very likely that Przyłuski's judgments, in their turn, impacted the attitudes of the authorities. Chapter 19 of Przyłuski's work is entitled “*De Vagis, ac Philistaeis*,” or “On Vagrants and Philistines.” Przyłuski wrote the following:

Since the existence of the Commonwealth depends on everyone being assigned to a certain way of life, our civil law stipulates that vagrants are servants to those on whose property and under whose jurisdiction they are staying [---] so that vagrants would not be a threat to peaceful people [---]. Whereas if our laws pay such great attention to vagrants and lazy people in our nation—even if those are sometimes useful for military or domestic services much more than Philistines, called here Gypsies, being of a nomadic or wandering habit of life—they also should make sure that they, in the face of their impunity, do not steal wherever they arrive, and do not cheat on simple people, and do not cadge or appropriate the upkeep that only those who work are deserving of, as well as that they do not take anything by force (Przyłuski 1553, 351–352)².

² Original text in Latin: “Quando quidem Respub[lica] aliter stare nequit, nisi ut quisque certo generi vitae sit addictus: Iure igitur nostro civili, vagi sunt servi omnium ad quorum bona seu Iurisdictionem perveniunt, ne scilicet hinc inde vagantes, pacificis hominibus insidentur, & velut morbi haec vel illa Reipub[licae] membra infestent, quae iuvare suo itidem labore ac industria debebant. Ac proinde leges de vagis, velut Reipub[licae] morbis, curandis, atque corrigendis aeditas, vide supra libro 1. capitulo 12. artic[ulo] 18 de officio ac potestate capitaneorum in vagos, & profugos: Item capitulo 16, articulo 6. & 7. de civitatibus: Item capit[ulo] 17. de kmetonibus articulo 6.7.9. Item libro 3. capit[ulo] 1. artic[ulo] 1 de nobilium fundis. Quod si leges nostrae tantopere animadvertunt in vagos & ociosos homines gentis nostrae, etiam si ii vel bellicis vel domesticis usibus sese interdum accommodant:

As Przyłuski observes further on in the document, “so that in our Commonwealth foreigners are not better off than our fellow countrymen, Philistines [better off] than Poles, and that their impunity does not encourage them to join bad company. Because those who publicly claim that they wander as a way of doing penance, imposed by whom it is not clear, effusively lie [---] this reason should not justify the Philistines not living a different way and not supporting the community of people with their work” (ibid.). Przyłuski clearly suggests that accepting the Gypsies and their way of life is morally wrong, and that they should be regulated by strict rules, that the “laws on vagrants, similarly to those regarding diseases of the Commonwealth, that need curing and improving” should be applied to them (ibid.).

Not many years later the first legal act against Gypsies in Poland was adopted. Article 18 of the *Statuta Seymu Warszawskiego, Roku pańskiego 1557* stipulates: “Gypsies or unnecessary people will be expelled by us from the Land and in the future should not be accepted

multo magis in Philistinos, Cyganos apud nos vocitatos, ex instituto vitae vagos ac erroneos animadvertere debuerant: ne videlicet tanta impunitate quocumq[ue] divertunt furentur, hominibus simplicibus dolis actq[ue] omnibus praestigiis imponant, & victum qui tantum operariis debetur ementiantur, ac praeripiant, saepe etiam vi praedentur: ne scilicet illud satyrici poetae in leges nostras, quadret.

Dat veniam corvis vexat censura columbas. Aut illud Davidis, quod absit, videbas furem currebas cum illo, & cum adulteris ponebas portionem tuam: Quam notam ut effugiamus, omnino isti ipsi circulatores ac circumscriptores compedibus essent ad opus aliquod rusticum, vel mechanicum, aut publicum alligandi: ne in Repub[lica] nostra potiore sint conditione externi quam indigenae, Philistini quam Poloni, & impunitas nostros quoq[ue] operarios ad societatem illorum amplius etiam sollicitet. Nam quod se conditione nescio cuius paenitentiae ex professo vagari asserunt, plane mentiuntur, & quam veterem Adamum exuerint, in fidemq[ue] mediatoris Christi sint erecti, praeterea q[ue] ad bona opera regenerati, vel talpae vident: ut hoc obiter attingam, paenitentiae ratione non pugnare cum politicis vitae officiis, sed in illis maxime exerceri: si quidem & primi parentes nostri mox post acceptum Evangelium de semine muliebri caput serpentis contrituri, Adam quidem ad operandum terram insudore vultus sui: Aeva vero ad pariendos liberos in dolore, ex praecepto Dei ab Cherubin gladio pulsati abierunt: ita ut Philistaeos hic praetextus excusare nequeat, quin alicui generi vitae addicantur, societatesq[ue] hominum labore suo iuvent, a turbandis autem illis omnino abstineant.”

here" (*Castr. Sand.*, t. 334, II; DOC. 1; *Volumina...*, t. II, 1859, 13). It is likely that the work by Przyłuski, a scientist and authority, encouraged the Sejm to take up the issue of the Gypsies and had an impact on the contents of this regulation.

At the same time, the first Polish literary-historical text presenting a negative image of the Gypsies is published. *The Chronicle that is the History of the World*³ by Marcin Bielski was published in Kraków in 1564. In the *Chronicle* Bielski presents not only his own judgments, but most likely also opinions widely held at the time. The *Chronicle* is not fully original work, at least as far the fragments devoted to Gypsies are concerned. The changes that took place in attitudes, as well as the internal policy of European countries at the turn of the 15th century, led to attempts to get rid of Gypsies, their banishment and repression. It is clear that the widespread opinions and writings on the topic were used as ideological justification of these actions, and in fact concerned not only Gypsies. Among the works that were published at the time, as well as the opinions expressed by scientists, the best known is the treatise by Sebastian Münster, entitled *Cosmographiae universalis* (hereafter cited in text as *Cosmographiae*), published for the first time in 1544 in Basel. The great level of popularity of this work can be illustrated by the fact that it was re-printed several times and translated into several languages within a short period of time. "On Christian People that are commonly known as *Züginer* and *Vagrants* in Latin" was the title of the chapter devoted to Gypsies.⁴ If we compare the *Chronicle* by Bielski and *Cosmographiae* by Münster, it appears that Bielski knew and used Münster's work; the beginning of the chapter "On the Gypsy Wanderings"⁵ from the *Chronicle* is simply copied from Münster's work. Yet Bielski is much harsher in his opinions than Münster is, and writes about Gypsies as "lazy, cunning, secretive, foul, wild and dark people [---] they made up a language appropriate for stealing so that nobody could

³ The original title is *Kronika tho iesth Historya Świata*.

⁴ The original title is "De Gentilibus Christianis, quos uulgo *Züginer* uocant, & latine *Errones*."

⁵ The original title is "O Cyganiech tułaczach."

understand them [---] hence they are elaborate thieves, especially their wives, from whose thefts their husbands live [---] they deal in horses, sell gold-plated copper, silver-plated iron [---] they sell master keys to thieves [---] wander from city to city, from village to village in all countries of the world [---] and go to enemy countries as spies”⁶ (Bielski 1976, 261–262). Bielski states these as facts, even though there is no justification for such judgments in the documents of the period.

Gypsies who were refugees were coming from the west, escaping repressions; yet, they were followed by the opinions and ideas brought to the Polish context by scientists of the time. I believe that this pervasion of ideas and the patterns of behavior towards Gypsies, including fear of them, is what gave rise to the adoption of legal acts against Gypsies in Poland, and that imitation, rather than the internal situation in the country or the state of affairs between the non-Gypsy environment and the Gypsies, was the basis of such regulations by the sejms. No factual evidence from archival sources justified the severity of the law. The documents that tell us about offences and robberies committed by Gypsies come from the second half of the 16th century, that is from the time when the sejm resolutions had already been in place, whereas we do not know of any such records from the 15th and the first half of the 16th century. This leads us to the unambiguous conclusion that nothing in the documents from the beginning of the 15th century to mid-16th century justifies taking up the Gypsy issue by the sejms and passing such legislation. Moreover, there is ample evidence that the law in this case imitates the solutions adopted in other countries, particularly in the German lands, as well as that the ideas justifying these legal acts were also borrowed from Western countries. It is probably for this particular reason that the negative stereotype of Gypsies spread so slowly, and the enforcement of the legal acts against them was so ineffective in Poland.

⁶ Translated from Polish: “lud próżniący, chytry, tajemny, plugawy, dziki, czarny [---] mówę sobie zmyślili ku kradzieży godną, aby ich nikt nierozumiał [---] stądże są misterni złodzieje, zwłaszcza żony ich, z których kradzieży mężowie żyją [---] końmi frymarczą, miedź pozłociwszy, żelazo pośrebrzwszy, przedaią [---] wytrychy złodzieiom czynią [---] włóczą się od miast do miast, od wsi do wsi po wszystkich krainach świata [---] y na szpiegi iężdżą do nie przyjacielskich krain.”

The Warsaw Sejm regulations were not effectively enforced, and soon enough the Sejm took up the Gypsy issue once again. The Constitution of the Piotrków Sejm from 1565 postulates, “that there should be no Gypsies in the Crown,”⁷ and “[s]ince because of the Gypsies a lot of evil is happening in the Crown, we enforce the 1557 Warsaw Statute against them and order that they not be in the Crown or any of Our Countries anymore from now on. And when a starosta⁸ expels them from his starostwo,⁹ no one else should give shelter to them”¹⁰ (*Castr. Crac. Inscr.*, t. 91, 30; *DOC. 2; Volumina...*, 1859, t. II, 52).

Although we do not know to what extent the sejm regulations of 1557 and 1565 were enforced, we may assume that there were complaints about insufficient implementation of the legislation judging from the fact that the Sejm returns to the Gypsy issue and the provision of shelter to them just a few years later, in 1578. The mere dozen or so documents known to us from the period before this date (presented in Chapter 2) do not fully justify the adoption of these regulations by the Sejm.

In literature on the history of Gypsies in Western Europe we often encounter the opinion that they were spies, and in particular, the accusation that they were acting on behalf of Turkey. The systematic increase of the scope of its influence over neighboring territories, the occupation of the Peloponnese, victories over the Bulgarian, Serbian, Vlach, and especially the Hungarian armies, made Turkey a real threat. Already Bielski claims in his *Chronicle* from 1564 that Gypsies are Turkish spies, but this is an opinion of the writer and scientist, and not a documented fact. Yet, people must have indeed feared Turkish spies. This can be confirmed by the regulations of the Sejmik¹¹ in Wisznia from 1575. One of the resolutions says: “And since the Crown is at a great danger because of spies, starostas

⁷ Translated from Polish: “Cyganie żeby w Koronie niebyli.”

⁸ *Starosta* was a royal official administering a territorial unit of a *starostwo*.

⁹ *Starostwo* was a small territorial unit administered by a *starosta*.

¹⁰ Translated from Polish: “Iż sie przez Cygany w Koronie siła złego dzieie, przeciwko tym Statut Warszawski 1557 w exekucyą przywiedziemy y rozkazujemy, aby ich koniecznie iuż od tego czasu w Koronie, y wszystkich Państwach Naszych niebyło. A kiedy ie ktory Starosta z Starostwa swego wypędzi, aby ich żaden nie przechowywał.”

¹¹ *Sejmik* (diminutive of *sejm*) was a local parliament of a given region or territorial unit.

should ensure that people suspected of spying do not move through the Crown [---] especially the Gypsies [---] and starostas should make this resolution public and capture the Gypsies and punish them by hanging”¹² (*Castr. Leopold. Ind. Rel.*, t. 336, 368; AGZ t. XX, 1909, 40). This is the only such known record from the 16th century. Not until a century later does the image of Gypsies as fortune-tellers, spies, and dexterous craftsmen become widespread, which is reflected in various documents.

Several years later the Warsaw Sejm assembled in the spring of 1578 and returned to the issue of Gypsies. Evidently, the previous acts were not properly respected either by Gypsies or by property owners. The new resolution was targeted mainly at the latter: “Although the Gypsies have been expelled on the basis of the resolution, they are still given shelter by some, thus, anyone who dares to welcome them and give them shelter should be brought in before the city court by anyone who would do so, and should be punished as an accomplice of the exile”¹³ (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 5, 1266; *DOC. 3; Volumina...*, t. II, 1859, 187). The above resolution is clearly analogous to the activities of Western European states; it became a ploy for many accusations and a rationale for many disputes.

The enforcement of the legal act of 1578 led to many false accusations and conflicts and it must have been indeed bothersome, since demands to repeal it started to appear. Protests came from the nobility of the Podlasie region, on whose properties at the time there were probably many Gypsy craftsmen. The law banning providing shelter to Gypsies probably also presented an opportunity to eliminate a neighbor or a personal enemy. With regard to this, since “there were those who sued because of private dissensions [---] for sheltering the Gypsies,”¹⁴ the General Sejm in Warsaw in 1607 decided that such

¹² Translated from Polish: “A iż przez szpiegi w wielkiej niebezpieczności jest Korona tedy starostowie tego z wielką pilnością przestrzegać mają jakoby ludzie podeyrzani po koronie nie przechadzali [---] a zwłaszcza Cygany [---] a państwo starostowie obwołać mają rozkazać i te Cygany łapać i na gardle karać.”

¹³ Translated from Polish: “Cygani acz są statutem wywołani, iednak ie przechowują, przetoż ktoby ie przyiąć y przechować śmiał, aby był pozwan od każdego, kto iedno chce takiemu actią uczynić, y karan tanquam complex banniti do Sądu Grodzkiego.”

¹⁴ Translated from Polish: “W związku z tym, że „znayduią się tacy, ktorzy z prywatnych waśni pozywają [---] o przechowywanie Cyganów.”

people should be fined, whereas “Starostas themselves must expel the Gypsies and vagrants. This Constitution should refer only to the Podlasie voivodeship”¹⁵ (*Castr. Sand.*, t. 334, 850; DOC. 4; *Volumina...*, t. II, 1859, 443). Apart from Podlasie, the general law still applied, which can be confirmed by the resolution of the General Sejm from 1611 (*Castr. Sand.*, t. 334, 1037; *Volumina...*, t. III, 1859, 38).

It is not entirely clear why the enforcement of these regulations was suspended in relation to the Podlasie region. We can only assume that there must have been many forms of cooperation and economic relations, including the services provided by Gypsy craftsmen, or wage-laborers, as well as trading in livestock, mainly horses, if the Sejm members decided it was justified to exclude Podlasie from this legislation. The documents related to Podlasie presented in the previous chapters appear to make it easier for us to understand this fact. It is also likely that the laws on Gypsies in force in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania had an impact on this situation as well. Despite the adoption of some regulations passed by the Crown¹⁶ sejms as the legal norms of the whole country soon after the Polish-Lithuanian union, the so-called Lithuanian Statutes remained in force. The regulations on Gypsies in these Statutes were different from the Crown laws. It is likely that these legal regulations can partially explain the fact that Gypsies in the Grand Duchy were a considerably larger community, and that we can also encounter them among servants and settled people.

The First Lithuanian Statute does not refer to Gypsies at all, whereas the Second Statute, issued in 1564, adding to the existing regulations of the Lithuanian law in its second chapter, entitled “On matters of war” (*O rzeczach wojennych*), contains a decision that “[n]o Gypsy or any other person whose honor or conduct are of doubt should be enlisted”¹⁷ (Czacki, t. I, 1800, 237–238). In the period of the next two years the Statute was supplemented by a range of new regulations, and the text adopted in 1566 is rather different from the

¹⁵ Translated from Polish: “...a Starostowie sami, Cygany y hultaie wyganiać mają. Która Constitucya samemu Woiewodztwu Podlaskiemu służyć ma.”

¹⁶ Here: the Polish Kingdom.

¹⁷ Translation from Polish: “Zaciężnym nie będzie Cygan, ani iakikolwiek człowiek, którego cześć, lub postępowanie są w podeyrzeniu.”

earlier version. Among other things it does not contain the provision banning Gypsies from enlisting for military service. Moreover, the resolution adopted in 1568 at the sejm in Grodno was included into the Second Statute. With regard to Gypsies, it confirmed the change of the regulation from 1564, and did not prohibit them from military service. It was decided that “whoever was willing to go to war mounted and armed or on foot, including Gypsies, all will be worthy of going to war; they should go to a *Hetman*¹⁸ and go mounted or on foot. And those who prove to be brave in the war will be awarded with mercy and a monetary contribution from the Grand Duke of Lithuania”¹⁹ (*Statut Wileński*, 1566, 163).

The next article by the Sejm in Grodno also refers to Gypsies, and it is different from what was decided at the Sejms in Warsaw and Piotrków. The article states: “We do not pass any taxes on any Gypsy, counting them as beggars so that without begging or stealing they might depart from our county, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and if someone does not want to go away, they should settle under us, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, as well as under dukes, lords, noblemen and fulfill their duties according to the Law”²⁰ (*ibid.*).

Despite the sejm resolutions regarding expelling Gypsies from the Commonwealth, they were allowed to stay, and were given shelter on private properties, as well as introductory letters. The sejm decisions and regulations were not respected, whereas the Gypsies for the first time in the Commonwealth received the right to settle in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. They were obliged to leave the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, just as in case of the Crown territories, yet those who did not want to leave had the right to settle.

¹⁸ *Hetman* is the leader of the army.—Author.

¹⁹ Translated from Polish: “Ktoby kolwiek ochoczym na potrzebę Woienną Konno z broyno iako mogąc iachał albo pieszo szedł także y Cyganie wszyscy do Woyny godni będą powinni do Pana Hetmana Na Woynie iachac y pieszo yść Akto się znich mężnie Wsłużbie Woienney pokażę takowemu łaską y datkiem od nas Hospodara nagrodzono będzie.”

²⁰ Translated from Polish: “Na żadnego Cygana podatkow nieuchwalamy policzaiący ich za żebraki aby tedy nieżebrzący anie kradniący swego Panstwa naszego WXLo Szli precz aktry by znich stego Panstwa precz isc niechciał takowy niechayby osiadłości brali tak pod nami Hospodarem iako y pod Kniazi Pany Szlachcicami Apowinnosc pełnili pode Ustawy.”

Since the Third Lithuanian Statute (1588) does not contain a clause that Gypsies cannot serve in the military, we can assume that it means that the earlier regulations remained in force. The Third Statute was in force until 1840. Thus, we can assume that also the clause regulating the status of Gypsies and relations with them remained in force until that time, or at least formally. The fact that so many Gypsies lived in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (and not only on the private properties of the Radziwiłłs) appears to indicate that the clause expelling Gypsies was not rigorously enforced. Or else, it was applied to wanderers and to new arrivals, whereas the settled ones or those migrating within the Duchy and possessing introductory letters, or so-called passports, were treated as a different category of people, as “our own” local Gypsies.

In contrast with the previously mentioned regulation of the Lithuanian Statute, *The Conscription Universal of the Anno Domini 1589* (*Uniwersał Poborowy Roku Bożego 1589*) and the following one from 1590 stipulate the following: “The Gypsies in the Grand Duchy must give 15 groszes from each person”²¹ (*Volumina...*, t. II, 1859, 297–298, 320). However, this probably means that although those Gypsies who led a vagrant life must leave the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, those who had settled or traveled within the Duchy, having received the relevant permission, and who had an occupation (e.g., are craftsmen) must pay a tax. The reasons for expelling Gypsies are not merely based on their alleged cheating and thievery, but the fear of them being spies is very significant. This accusation, of them being spies for the Turks, appears commonly at the time, and many legal acts issued in the 16th century in different European countries against Gypsies bring up this accusation as an argument for their expulsion. Once again, the local sejmik in 1618 in Sanok warns against the threat in the borderlands coming from robbers, Gypsies and Turks.

In 1624 the Sejm in Warsaw adopted a resolution banning extending hospitality to Vlachs, Serbs, and people who are not settled, and the lawmakers referred to the existing regulation banning provision of shelter to Gypsies (*Castr. Sand.*, t. 334, 1530; *Volumina...*, t. III, 1859,

²¹ Translated from Polish: “Cygani w Wielkim Xięstwie Litewskim od kaźdey osoby po groszy piętnaście dać powinni.”

225–226). The Constitution from 1624 is the last document against the Gypsies passed by the sejm; further steps took the direction of solving the problem by using the established institution of the Gypsy king or elder. The first such act known to us is from 1652, dating back to the times of John Casimir. This means that between 1624 and 1652 it became necessary to look for new solutions rather than to simply expel Gypsies from the country.

This was not, however, the last act regulating the situation of Gypsies; in the 17th–18th centuries, local authorities made various decisions with regard to Gypsies. For example, the municipal authorities of the town of Boćki in Podlasie decided to limit the period of stay of Gypsies coming for fairs to three days, threatening those not complying with this regulation with a financial fine (*Arch. Roskie, sygn. CC/1*). The Sejmik in Wisznia comes back to the issue of providing shelter to Gypsies on noblemen's properties on the 10th of September, 1737. A regulation was adopted, due to complaints of landlords against those who let Gypsies stay on their properties, making the local *rittmeister* accountable for public safety, responsible for driving the Gypsies away, whenever they might arrive in that region (*Castr. Leopold. Ind. Rel.*, t. 538, 212). The issue of expelling Gypsies and punishing those who give them shelter was raised several more times, for example in 1748 (*Grodz. chełm. Rel. Manif.*, t. 50, 713; *Dyaryusze...*, t. I, 1911, 278). About a dozen years later, in 1761, Przemyśl landlords adopted a resolution at their regional assembly, stipulating “so that the Gypsies in villages and towns, fairs and markets do not wander, they should be captured and [taken] to courts”²² (*Terr. Premisl. Lib. Dis.*, t. 260, 202).

There are also several *wilkierzes*²³ from the 17th and first half of the 18th centuries from northern parts of the Commonwealth. The originals of these legal acts have not been preserved. Fortunately, a book of copies of rural *wilkierzes* created in the first half of the 18th century was preserved in the Gdańsk archive, thanks to which we know the contents of these regulations. On the 15th of November,

²² Translated from Polish: “żeby się Cyganie po wsiach y miastach, targach y jarmarkach nie włóczyli, onych łapać i do sądów [przekazywać].”

²³ *Wilkierz* (from German *Willkür*) was a resolution or a legal act adopted usually by municipal councils in the cities granted the Magdburg Rights.

1613, the bishop of Wrocław issued a *wilkierz* referring to the village of Szotland (Stare Szkoty) near Gdańsk (today a part of the city), making the taking of vagrants as lodgers an offence punishable by 20 *florins* (*Willkühren*, sygn. 300, R/Tt. 12, 262). Seven years later, on the 26th of June, 1620, Paweł Wołucki, the successor of Gembicki to the bishop's office, renewed this regulation, clearly referring to Gypsies (*ibid.*, 140). We find an almost identical wording in a *wilkierz* issued by Leonard Rembowski, the abbot of the monastery in Pelplin, for the village of Hoppenbruch (Górka Pelplińska), issued on the 4th of July, 1621 in Pelplin (*ibid.*, 678). It is worth noting that Piotr Rotemberg and his group stayed in Szotland on several occasions half a century before. Something must have happened that considerably spoiled the relations of the residents of Szotland (Szkoty) and Górka Pelplińska (Hoppenbruch) with Gypsies.

Later *wilkierzes*, from 1676 and 1692, are more precise with regard to Gypsies (*Archiwum...*, 1938, 176). But the issue is most fully presented in the *wilkierz* by Michał Antoni Sapieha from 1749 for the Tuchola²⁴ starostwo: "No one should consult magicians, prophets, fortune-tellers, quacks, Gypsies, witches or engage in undoing of magical acts or fortune-telling or welcome any robbers, thieves and prostitutes in one's home"²⁵ (*ibid.*, 313).

This document explains why the formulations in the *wilkierzes* from the second half of the 17th and first half of the 18th centuries happen to be almost identical. In the introduction of Sapieha's *wilkierz*, it is mentioned in that it is based on an earlier legal act established in 1643 by Albrycht Stanisław Radziwiłł, chancellor of the Great Duchy of Lithuania and Tuchola starosta. Evidently this act became a model for regulations issued by other starostas.

The fact that the Sejm regulation from 1578 banning the sheltering of Gypsies formally still applied, despite that it evidently was not always respected, is illustrated by entries in the Biecz and Kraków books. It is likely that we would find similar records in the acts of other

²⁴ Tuchola is a city to the north of Bydgoszcz.

²⁵ Translated from Polish: "guślarzow, czarownic nikt się radzić nie ma, ani żegnania albo wrożenia nie przypuszczać, jako też i do domow nie przyjmować, toż i zbojcow, złodziejow, podejrzanych osob, wywołańcow i nierządnic."

cities, although knowledge about the past of Gypsies is still limited, and there have been no special efforts made to find this information. In the Kraków and Biecz acts from the 17th and 18th centuries, we find about a dozen entries, out of which about half refer to accusations of larceny, and five entries refer to providing shelter to Gypsies in private properties in the city. These documents demonstrate that such accusations could lead to grave consequences. If the claimant was stubborn and in case of ineffectiveness of his denunciation, he appealed to the higher court, the person accused of hosting Gypsies could even be sentenced to banishment. This does not mean that such a sentence would be enforced. As we know, court trials could take up to several years and sentences were not always carried out, especially when the accused was a nobleman and the case was not regarded as a grave crime.

In June 1636, an action was brought against Maksymilian Walkanowski from Olpiny, a village near Jasło, a town in the south of Poland. Mikołaj Spytek Ligęza, a Sandomierz castellan and the starosta of Biecz, sued Walkanowski for providing shelter to Gypsies, and demanded his banishment. Such accusations often resulted in long court trials and their outcome is often not known to us. In this case, however, we do know that the sentence was passed that “this Walkanowski, as a rebel who revolts against the Crown’s common law, is banished from the Polish Kingdom and its fiefs and dependent countries”²⁶ (*Castr. Biec.*, t. 458, 547). A similar case was tried before the Biecz municipal court in 1654 and 1655. Starosta Jan Wielopolski sued nobleman Kazimierz Rozen on the basis of accusations by Jan Opatkowski, the heir of Bieszna, charging him with taking care of and providing aid to the Philistines, called the Gypsies, for half a year, despite the legal ban and thus deserving “a punishment as an accomplice, which means the same banishment from the Kingdom.”²⁷ Rozen did not acknowledge the accusations and appealed

²⁶ Translated from Polish: “tenże Walkanowski jako buntownik i prawu pospolitemu koronnemu sprzeciwiający się z Królestwa Polskiego i państw jemu podległych jest wywołany.”

²⁷ Translated from Polish: “pod karą współnictwa, to znaczy podobne wygnanie i wywołanie z Królestwa.”

to the higher court (*Castr. Biec.*, t. 470, 612–613). We do not know how the dispute was finally settled, but we can see that from time to time the Sejm constitution regulations were taken very seriously, since persons offering shelter to Gypsies were sometimes sentenced to banishment. It is difficult to say whether the fact that the accused were not landlords, even though they belonged to the nobility, was of significance here. It is possible that they had some businesses that connected them with Gypsies, even though there is no information with regard to this in the indictments.

The indictment brought by the Crown Tribunal in Lublin in 1672 was of an even graver nature. The Tribunal summoned "the Honourable Jan Wielopolski from Pieskowa Skała [---] as well as the glorious: city mayor, councilors, *wójt*, aldermen and the whole town hall of the city of Słomniki, [who were] pronounced eternal exiles."²⁸ Starosta Wielopolski was accused of failing to sentence the members of the Słomniki town hall, despite the court trial "with regard to the Philistine or Gypsy people, thieves, vagrants, immoral crooks and leading a life of larceny [---] having been accepted in the town of Słomniki and given support in the same town of yours"²⁹ (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 99, 2063–2066). In the Biecz and Kraków acts from the second half of the 17th century and the 18th century, there are also entries referring to several other disputes and complaints with regard to sheltering Gypsies.

This all indicates that the ban on lodging Gypsies and accusations with regard to giving shelter to them, with reference to the Crown legislation from the 16th century, continued well into the 17th and 18th centuries, albeit with various levels of intensity. We know little about the enforcement of the legislation because we do not know of any relevant evidence, only indirect information from archival records from outside Poland and other sources. The author of a very well-known article about Gypsies in the eastern parts of Ukraine, Plochinskij,

²⁸ Translated from Polish: "jaśnie Wielmożnemu Janowi z Pieskowej Skały Wielopolskiemu, [---] oraz sławetnym: burmistrzowi, rajcom, wójtowi, ławnikom i całemu magistratowi miasta Słomniki, ogłoszonym wieczystymi banitami."

²⁹ Translated from Polish: "względem ludzi Filistynów albo Cyganów, jawnych złodziei, włóczęgów, występnych oszustów i prowadzących życie złodziejskie [---] do miasta Słomniki przyjęcia i w tymże mieście waszym sprzyjania."

claims that during the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries, Gypsies were resettled from central Poland to the peripheral territories. Plochinskij cites documents from the historical archive in Kharkov (eastern Ukraine). The author mentions two Gypsies, Wojciechowicz and Jankowski, who came from Poland together with their co-ethnics. The documents referring to these two groups date from 1740 and 1746. However, Gypsies expelled from Poland were arriving in this part of Ukrainian territories also earlier (Plochinskij 1890, 98–99). We do not know how considerable the migratory movement of the Gypsies from Poland to the Ukrainian territories on the left bank of the Dnieper River was, but most likely it was not limited to the abovementioned groups. In light of this incomplete information, as the text by Plochinskij is generally devoted to the Gypsies from so-called Lesser Russia (Ukraine) and the information about arrivals from Poland is just one of the issues covered by it, we can better understand the resolutions by the sejmiks in Sanok (in 1618), Wisznia (in 1575 and 1737), or Przemyśl (in 1761), when the fears about Gypsy spies cooperating with enemy armies became apparent. Although this obviously does not imply that Gypsies did indeed perform such a function, it is understandable that groups of people moving from Russian or Turkish territories in the direction of the Commonwealth raised concerns of the nobility from borderland territories. This may also serve as indirect evidence of the deepening distance between Gypsies and the rest of the society of the Commonwealth in the 18th century. Kitowicz presents some evidence of active attempts to get rid of Gypsies. As this author shows, during the reign of August III regular army units were used to capture “thieves, robbers, Gypsies, and Ukrainian *haidamakas*,”³⁰ which could testify to the seriousness of the perceived threat (Kitowicz 1950, 294).³¹

From the end of the 18th century and throughout the 19th century, a new and more consistent policy, based on the legal systems of the states that partitioned Poland,³² was conducted. In all three cases

³⁰ *Hajdamakas* (from Turkish *haydamak*, “to pursue”) were Cossacks and armed peasants from Eastern Ukraine, forming paramilitary bands in the 18th century.

³¹ Translated from Polish: “rabusiów, zbójców, Cyganów lub hajdamaków ukraińskich.”

³² Translated from Polish: “Austrii, Prus, Rosji—państw, które dokonały podziału Polski u schyłku XVIII stulecia.” The partitioning powers in the 18th century—Austria, Prussia and Russia.—Trans. (?)

the policy towards Gypsies was rather harsh; it was aimed at forcing them to stop wandering and assimilate with the mainstream society.

What has been presented above is only part of the story, however. There is also ample evidence that the relations between Gypsies and the rest of society developed well. This is confirmed by acts found in the archives of Kraków, Warsaw, Lwów, and Vilnius. Also the collection of the former archive in Königsberg contains many such documents. The documents show that some Gypsies—families and groups—led settled lives for a long time, making a living by being craftsmen. We can learn about this from 16th- and 17th-century documents from the territories of Lithuania and Prussia, collected in the former Königsberg archive (now in Berlin), as well as many other documents originating for the most part from the eastern regions of the old Commonwealth. Some Gypsies were also farmers, cultivating land that they sometimes also owned. We can also occasionally encounter Gypsies among royal court servants; there is ample evidence to this in the 18th-century acts of the Radziwiłłs.

A wide assortment of court documents and introductory letters indicates that Gypsies in Poland did not constitute an integrated and closed group, guided by their own laws and authorities, their own tradition and culture, and living in the margins of mainstream society. This conclusion follows from the fact that Gypsies often referred to local courts to settle disputes even when both parties of the dispute were Gypsies. This is well illustrated by the documents discussed in the previous chapters, those from Kraków (1549), from Lipno (1556), from Gdańsk and Tczew (1559), as well as many later documents from the 17th century. Another document that tells us much in this matter is a complaint by one Gypsy, called Łukaszewicz, against another Gypsy, called Rosłankiewicz, that was filed at the court of Mściśław voivode in October 1663. Łukaszewicz accuses Rosłankiewicz of robbing his farmyard in the village of Sleniewie and kidnapping his father and his family in collaboration with Cossacks and rowdies from Muscovy (*Akty...*, t. XXXIV, 1909, 310–311).

Even in Silesia, where conflicts with Gypsies gave rise to anti-Gypsy legislation in Poland, the attitude towards them was far from being unambiguously hostile. The letter by Wrocław councilors from July 1, 1572, the letter by Duke Jerzy of Legnica and Brześć (*Księst. Głogowskie*, Re 24, sygn. 297, 5 and 11), and some other documents

show that while lawbreakers were at the center of attention of authorities and security services, Gypsies were not yet treated as such. Only later documents, from 1615, 1618, and 1619, and from the Brześć (Brest), Głogów, Oleśnica, and Nysa Duchies, as well as the 1618 patent of Archduke Charles Habsburg, the bishop of Wrocław and Emperor's Viceroy of Upper and Lower Silesia, with regard to special mounted guards for protection against Gypsies, show that hostility towards Gypsies had considerably increased. The majority of the discussed documents (there are only differences with regard to their details) indicate that the migration of Gypsies intensified, and this intensification was the reason for those regulations. A document issued by Karol, the duke of Oleśnica and Ziębica, on the 19th of December, 1615 states: "We are receiving complaints from various places that once again many Gypsies are in the country and that they regularly bother poor people."³³ The document speaks of renewing the old laws against Gypsies and introducing new ones "in order to rule once again that if the mentioned Gypsies do not leave the country within 14 days and still remain in it and, what is more, continue to rob, assault and attack people on public roads and dare to threaten people's lives and health,"³⁴ a mounted guard service will be established that will capture them and take them to prisons (*Księst. Nyskie*, Re 31, sygn. 216, 8). This document, issued in Brzeg by John Christian on March 21, 1619, is particularly interesting for scholars of the history of Gypsies. It appears to be related to the arrival of a new, and apparently more numerous, group of Gypsies in "untidy dress, bearing weapons and arms, which were not used by them before. And they claim to be either people from Egypt Minor, or Gypsies or former Czech soldiers"³⁵ (*Księst. Nyskie*, Re 31, sygn. 216, 29; DOC. 5).

³³ Translated from Polish: "Z różnych miejsc przychodzą skargi, że znowu mnóstwo Cyganów dało się zauważyć w kraju i zwykli naprzykrzać się ubogiej ludności."

³⁴ Translate from Polish: "aby na nowo zarządzono, że jeżeli wspomniani Cyganie nie opuszczą kraju w ciągu 14 dni, lecz dalej będą się w nim znajdować i ponadto na publicznych drogach będą ludzi plądrować, rabować, gwałcić i napadać, a także będą ważyć się nastawać na życie i zdrowie ludzkie."

³⁵ Translate from Polish: "zaniedbanych strojach, a także z przedtem przez nich nie używanym uzbrojeniem i bronią. A podają się raz za ludzi z Małego Egiptu, raz za Cyganów, raz za byłych żołnierzy czeskich."

In Silesia, non-Polish laws were in force, but also there we can see that the attitude towards Gypsies, although far from being favorable, was not as hostile as it was in the territories not far away to the west. It is also possible that the intensification of migrations of Gypsies and the following reactions of local authorities were the reason for the increasing migration of Gypsies to Poland.

DOCUMENTS

innotescencya ich á Mándatem Nášym/ będzie winien każdy obżałowá/
 ny stánać/ á bez wśelákich odwłok z strona žaluiaca rozeprzeć sie.
 Cygáni/ ábo ludzie niepotrzebni/ beda przez Nas z Ziemie wywołá/
 ni/ y ná potym nie máia byđz do niey przyimowani.
 Iż do tego času záhánować sie to nie może/ áby ná wolnych rze/
 kách Jázy nie byly/ ponawiaiac stáre Státutá/ wstáwiamy : áby każdy
 ktory Jáz ná swym imieniu ma/ zrzucił gi do Swiateł przyślych. wyia/
 wśy Jáz ná Sanie v Przemyślá dla Soli Nášey. A ktoby tego nie v/
 czynił/ nád stáre winy Státutem opisáne/ ktore w mocy zostáwuiemy/

podanymi Ko-
 ronnymi y Lite-
 nyjskimi Commis-
 sarze máia ro-
 spráwić.
 Cygani y ludzie
 niepotrzebni z
 Ziemie máia
 byđz wywołáni.
 Jázy ná rzekách
 wolnych, aby by-
 ty zrzucane.

DOC. 1 · 1557. The entry to the Sanok municipal records of a fragment of the constitution adopted by the sejm of Warsaw on banishing Gypsies from Poland.

Castrensia Sandecensia, t. 334, p. II [APK (I)]

Cygáni żeby w Koronie
nie niebyli.

Z sie przez Cygány w Koronie śitá ztego dzieie/
 przeciwko tym Státut Wárszáwski 1 5 5 7. w
 erekucya przywiedziemy / y rostkáziemy / áby ich
 koniecznie inż od tego času w Koronie y wśyst-
 kich Páństwach Nášych niebyło. A kiedy ie ktory Stárośtá
 z Stárośtwa swego wypedzi / áby ich żaden nieprzechowy-
 wał.

DOC. 2 · 1565. The entry in the Kraków municipal records of the constitution forbidding Gypsies to stay in the territory of the Crown, adopted at the sejm in Piotrków.

Castrensia Cracoviensia Inscriptiones, t. 91, p. 30 [APK (I)]

Cygáni:

Cygáni ácz są statutem wywołani/ iednak ie przechowuią. Przez toż koby ie przyiać y przechować śmiać / áby był pozwan od káżdego/ kto iedno chce takiemu actia weźnić/ y karan/ tanquam complex banniti do sądu Grodzkiego .

DOC. 3 · 1578. The entry to the Kraków municipal records of the Kraków constitution regarding suing people who sheltered Gypsies, adopted at the sejm in Warsaw.

Castrensia Cracoviensia Relationes, t. 5, p. 1266 [APK (I)]

850

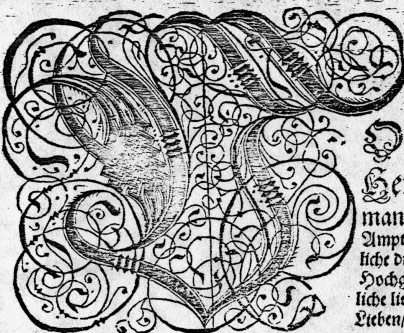
Constitutio Seymii

46. Opozwach complicum bannitorum.

Należy sie tácy / ktorzy z prywatnych wasni / pozywają pro complicitate bannitorum, choć nie od tych co pozywają/ są banniti, & iure victi, á dru, dzy o przechowywanie Cyganiom/ per substitutas personas czynią: postłana, wiamy/ áby pro complicitate nie pozywał/ iedno iure victor, ktorzy bannito, wał onego/ o ktorego complicitatem pozywają/ y tenże Delator; á in absentia tego/ ten ktorzy te sprawy odprawia/ pánstwie płacić ma. A Starostowie sami/ Cygany / y kultaie wyganiać mają. Ktora Constitucya samemu Woiewodztwu Podlaskiemu służyć ma.

DOC. 4 · 1607. The entry to the Sącz municipal records of the constitution restricting the possibility to sue people sheltering Gypsies and imposing the duty on starostas to expel them.

Castrensia Sandecensia, t. 334, p. 850 [APK (I)]



Denn Gottes Gnaden Wir Johann Christian/ Hertzog in Schlesien zur Liegnitz vnd Brieg / Obrister Haupt- man in Ober vnd Nieder Schlesien/

Enbietten allen vmb jeden des Kayserl. Ober-
Amptes Verwandten vnd Vnderthanen/ so hienit in Ober vnd Nieder Schlesien erachtet werden / Unsere freund-
liche dienste/ freundschaft/ gunst/ gnade/ vnd alles gutes/ Hochwürdt. i. h. i. / Durchlauchtigster/ Hochwürdtigster/
Hochgebohrne Fürsten/ Ehrwürdtigste/ Wolgebohrne/ Alredichtige/ Gestrangte/ Ehrenreiche/ Ehrsame/ Weiße/ freund-
liche liebe Herrn Schanden/ Vettere/ Schwägerer/ Brüderer vnd Vroattern / auch gute freunde / besondere
Lieben/ vnd getreuen/ E. L. L. den Herrn vnd Euch sollen wir freundschaftlichen/ in freundschaft/ auch gütli-
cher vnd genädiger meinung nicht pargen/ das bey vnß auß unterschiedenen orten mit sonderem beschwehre einohm-
men/ Welcher gestaltes die Thawier sich widerumb von newen hin vnd wider im Lande in vngewöhnlicher Kleidung / dann auch mit hieborn ihnen vng-
gebräuchlicher Armatur vnd Wassen verwickeln lassen/ vnd bald für Leute auß klein Egypten / baldt für Buchemische / bald auch für Böhmische getroffene
Soldaten sich aufgeben/ im Lande auß vnd abziehen / vnd doch des Tages oft nicht eine halbe meile weg / baldt zertheilt / baldt widerumb zusammentrott-
ret / ford reisen / vnd dadurch nicht allein mit allerley betrug dem gemeinen Namine grossen schaden befürgen sondern auch auff offener freyer Landstrassen die
Leute mit handhafter that anzufallen/ zur plündern/ zuüberauben/ auch sie mit andern schwehr bedrätzlichen vnd gramhessigen wordten anzufassen/ ja auch woll
an Leib vnd Leben zuebschädigen sich ganz freventlich vntersiehen sollen.

Wann wir denn dieselb ganz weit auffgehendem vnter vnd landes vereerndt bey zeitlen fürzuehomben einer sonderbahren notturt befunden / vnd darumb
nach heilsamer verordnung der hochlöblichen Vorfahren / damit sie in dero gleichen fällen dem gemeinen Vaterlande nützlich providiret / mit rath/ vorwissen/ vnd
zuestimmung der nechst angehörenden Fürsten vnd Stände / die wir dighfalls zuvernehmen gelegenheit gehabt / endlich geschlossen / nicht allein vermittlest vnser-
er außgefertigten Ober-Amptspatenten/ sondern auch mit zuehat der landes besidten Einpennigern/ vnd ob es die notturt erforderet / mit genädlicher zuthun-
vnd hülfserzuegung einer jedweden Obrigkeit von Lande vnd Städten dieses vnnütze/ Raubrische vnd landfreichende Gefindel also baldt/ vnd ohne verzug auß
dem lande zue schaffen.

Diesem nach nuhen / vnd damit solches/ wie pillich / zue gepüender volziehung gütliche werden möge / so ist an E. L. L. die Herrn vnd Euch hienit vnser
gütliches Ober-Amptes-Ermahnen vnd beschlich / an die vnserrn aber vnser Ernstes verschaffen / E. L. L. die Herrn vnd Ihr wollen in dero Fürstenthümern/
Landen/ Herrschaften/ Graffen/ vnd Amptern die gewisse verfügung thun / damit des landes Einpennigern auß ihr ansuchen / vnd vermöge vnser ihnen unte-
gegebenen Patents aller ordten vnd Enden von den nechst angehörigen Städten vnd Dörffern deromassen hüffliche handt gebotten werde / auß das solche offentliche
landes beschädiger vnd deroelben Notten zertrennet/ nieder geworfen/ vnd auß des gemeinen landes vncosten in die Nechsten Wachbildes Städte zue schaffen gebracht/
vnd nach gelegenheit der sachen an Leib vnd Leben gestrafft/ oder mit Ewigger vertreibung des landes abgeschafft/ vnd die ohne diß mehr dan zuviel beschwerliche In-
trohner von ihnen beruhiget werden mögen / massen vnß den gar nicht zweifelt/ weil solches allen ins gemein/ vnd einem jeden zum besten gereicht / sich hienach
meniglich erheischender gepür zuzeigen wilsamb vn bereit erfinden lassen werde / Es volbringen auch E. L. L. die Herrn vnd Ihr an dhem vnser gütliches
Ober-Amptesermahnen vnd beschlich / die vnserrn aber vnser Ernstes verschaffen / vnd wir verbleiben E. L. L. den Herrn vnd Euch zue freundschaftlichen diensten/
freundschaft/ gütlichem vnd genädigem willen vnd allem guten jederzeit beflissen vnd geneigt/ Datum Brieg den 21. Monats Tag Martij dieses 1619. Jah-
res / vnter vnserm hien auf gedruckten Fürstlichen Secret.

21. III. 1619

DOC. 5 · 21. 03. 1619, Brzeg. John Christian, Duke of Legnica-Brzeg, the Emperor's viceroy in the Lower and Upper Silesia calls upon the states of Silesia to expel the Gypsies from Silesia.

Księstwo Nyskie, Re 31, sygn. 216, s. 29 [APW]

Cultural Adaptation of Gypsies in the 17th Century

The collection of 17th-century documents known to me is smaller than those of the 16th-century. I found forty-two different records, and the majority, thirty-one documents, come from the eastern parts of the Commonwealth. Out of those thirty-one acts, seventeen belong to the archive collections of Berlin with the majority of them referring to the same issue: disputes between Gypsies and complaints, as well as settlements regarding attacks by Hungarian Gypsies on Vlach Gypsies, which took place in the Wyzów Forest¹ in the last decade of the century, and disputes of financial nature. It is hard to tell today what the history of this very interesting collection was. Just as in the case of the documents referring to Piotr Rotemberg, discussed in Chapter 3, these documents come from the former archive in Königsberg, moved at the end of WWII before the arrival of Soviet troops. We do not know from where and how the documents on the robberies ended up in Königsberg, especially in such a considerable number. Most likely they were kept by one of the families involved in the dispute, similar to the documents referring to Piotr Rotemberg, and then were passed on to the Königsberg archive, possibly with the help of the Radziwiłłs. The majority of the remaining documents from this century come from the archives of Kraków and Biecz, and refer to different towns in the southern part of the country.

I omit here all documents of a special nature, such as nominations for leaders of the Gypsies, issued by the royal chancellery, and decisions by sejm or local authorities that were legal acts regulating the stay of Gypsies. These documents are presented and analyzed in Chapters 4 and 6 of this book.

¹ The explanation of the name of the forest is provided below.

In 17th-century documents, we do not find any elements that would indicate some fundamental change with regard to both the situation of Gypsies, as well as the attitude towards them, in comparison to the previous centuries. Apart from the collection of documents referring to the attacks and robberies in the Wyzów Forest, the remaining documents fall into several categories. What is surprising is the lack of documents mentioning horse dealing, fortune-telling, or Gypsy craftsmen. What is also rather enigmatic is the lack of information about Gypsy servants, as was evident in many documents from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the previous century. It is possible that this was an indicator of considerable assimilation processes, which resulted in the change of surnames from distinctively “Cygan” names into other ones, from designations of ethnonymic nature to ambiguous ones. It appears that the 18th-century documents from the Radziwiłł collection point to this particular change. Thus, only additional information on one’s ethnic origin would let us know whether a person was a Gypsy or not. A change of surnames would indicate an advanced process of not only cultural adaptation, but often also of assimilation. Apart from the documents from Königsberg, which comprise a rather consistent collection, we do not find any new issues in the remaining acts (apart from one entry). Part of the Gypsies settled in rural areas and functioned in the same way as the rest of the surrounding community, thus becoming part of the peasantry or minor nobility. The only thing that would make them stand apart would be their surname, but certainly not in all cases. Social stratification among Gypsies increased in this century, leading in the longer perspective to either complete assimilation or distance and separation from non-Gypsies. Today it is difficult to answer the question of why some of them became peasants, and others found an opportunity to become townsmen or marry into minor noble families. Apart from the settled Gypsies, we also see that there were Gypsies in villages, members of wandering groups, who stayed temporarily. We find evidence of this in the Kraków and Biecz acts; most often these are accusations against property owners providing shelter to Gypsies. We do not know how these Gypsies earned their living, and even though the documents contain accusations about thefts and robberies, there is no proof of such, and we may just as well be

facing cases of false accusations aimed at increasing the power of arguments made by the plaintiffs. When some Gypsies could find shelter on someone's property, it is likely that they made their living by trade or craft, but the documents do not offer us any clear information. Also, the so-called passports, or introductory letters and safe passage documents, between some towns or villages indicate that the category of Gypsy-traveler was a rather wide one, and they were not necessarily considered vagrants.

There are two documents from 1605 that refer to a family dispute, taking place in the village of Radwanowice, near Kraków. On Friday, September 9, 1605, "Noble Bogumiła, the daughter of Noble Stanisław Mirota, wife of honest Jan Cygan"² lodged a complaint against a local nobleman for battery and assault (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 32, 1345). The reason for this assault is not clear, but another entry made in the same books a week later sheds some light on this case. The background of this dispute was clearly related to family property matters (*ibid.*, 1393). Yet, other issues are interesting with regard to these entries. Bogumiła was noble-born, the daughter of Noble Mirota and her husband is "honest"³ Jan Cyganek. We do not know how this misalliance came to be, maybe his financial position was of significance here, since two years earlier he took a lease in the village of Radwanowice. He certainly was not a poor peasant and must have been a permanently settled person coming from a settled family, or otherwise Bogumiła would not be given to him as a wife. Despite all the unknowns in this case, it is clear that a Gypsy named Jan, not a nobleman, married the daughter of a nobleman. The marriage brought him considerable prestige and enhanced his social position. This most likely was not a common phenomenon.

We learn about another Gypsy, Jan from Zwierzyniec (today a district of Kraków), from the 1639 Kraków acts. This is a testimony of a court official with regard to Wojciech Cygan, in relation to problems with enforcing a court sentence (unpaid debt to Jan Cygan). The ownership of a fulling mill in Kazimierz and the estate of the debtor

² Translated from Polish: "Szlachetna Bogumiła, córka szlachetnego Stanisława Miroty, żona uczciwego Jana Cygana."

³ Honest (*uczciwy* in Polish) was a term used to refer to people of peasant origin.

were to be passed to Cygan; however, the wife of the debtor refused to submit to the court judgment and the enforcement of the court decision was not successful (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 53, 719). Despite his low social status, Wojciech Cygan must have been a well-off person if he possessed large sums of money to loan. We do not know how he managed to acquire this money; possibly, he earned a living as a craftsman or a merchant.

The figure of a Gypsy settled in a village appears once again several years later. In the Radziwiłł archive documents, referring to the borderland territories of the former Commonwealth, we find a protocol-complaint by officials who were supposed to prepare an examination of the royal properties in Molawki, near Minsk. We learn from this lengthy, seven-page document that the inspectors arrived in Molawki on October 21, 1647, with the aim of measuring the land and establishing the amount of tax. However, they could not start their activities because the residents of the property rebelled against them and prevented them from performing their duties (*Arch. Radziw.*, dz. X, sygn. 206, 1). We also learn that two of the residents of Molawki, Piotr Karaban along with his sons and Stefan Cygan, did not want to join the rebels (*ibid.*, 6). The end of this case is not known. It is clear, however, that Stefan Cygan was a settled long-term resident, and was not a peasant, but rather the holder of a sub-lease for part of the royal properties in Molawki, which seems to follow directly from the document.

When discussing the history of Gypsies, one cannot simply ignore the above-mentioned cases. We most certainly encounter people of Gypsy origin in these documents, even though the few documents referring to Gypsy-travelers, who live in groups or at least demonstrate their Gypsy identity, may appear more interesting in this period of history.

Documents from the Vilnius acts also refer to a wealthy man. The case is related to the Russo-Polish War of 1654 and the invasion of the Moscow army. On January 20, 1655, a privilege granted by King John Casimir to several Połock townsmen was entered into the Vilnius municipal acts. The document says that several Połock townsmen—among the four mentioned by name there is a Martinus Cyhanowicz—refused to give in and left Połock, abandoning their

properties (*Akty Wilen. Magistr.*, Nr 5099, 4–5). As a reward for their loyalty to the king, the Połock townsmen were granted the freedom of trading in the cities of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Crown, and an exemption from taxes. Cyhanowicz was a person of very high social status; two out of those mentioned by name—Rozmysłowicz and Cyhanowicz—are *consulares*, or former city mayors. If Cyhanowicz reached such a high position as the mayor of Połock, he must have been granted city rights much earlier. Most probably he was born in Połock to a family boasting unquestionably high social rank.

Documents granted to leaders of groups in order to facilitate the nomadic habit of life represent a very important type of source material. Few introductory letters have been preserved due to their very nature; they were destroyed, often as a result of wear and tear from heavy use, or were thrown away as useless at the time of death of the person in whose name they had been issued, or in any other circumstances. Various situations, such as hasty flight or loss of property, were also a reason why so few of these documents survived into our times. We know of such documents from the 15th century, from the collection of Piotr Rotemberg. We also know of six introductory letters or travel permits from the 17th century.

In the Warsaw AGAD archive, there are two such “passports” issued for Klimunt Florianowicz. The first document was issued in Rozprza,⁴ on September 25, 1669. The starosta of Rozprza, who issued the document, acknowledged that “Honest Klimunt Floryanowic, the Gypsy Elder, together with His Company at the common fair in Rosprza [---] behaved decently and modestly,”⁵ and that he issues this “opinion” to Florianowicz *ex officio* “so that the above-mentioned together with his company may have access to towns and cities”⁶ (AGAD: *Zbiór dok. papier.*, no 1618/1). Florianowicz most probably was professionally engaged in craft or trade, whereas markets and fairs were a natural and convenient place for selling. Wandering

⁴ Rozprza is a city in central Poland, about 50 km to the south of Łódź.

⁵ Translated from Polish: “Ucciwy Klimunt Floryanowic Cygan Starszy z Towarzystwem Swym na Jarmarku pospolitym w Rosprzy [---] przystoynie y skromnie sprawowali się.”

⁶ Translated from Polish: “aby snadnieyszy do Miast y Miasteczek z Towarzystwem swoim miał przystę.”

was a permanent feature of his group, although they probably suspended their wandering way of life during winter. This is confirmed by another document issued in the name of Florianowicz, as on November 10th of the same year he received an introductory letter certifying his good conduct. This letter was issued in Tomice, about 25 km to the southwest of Poznań. Florianowicz stopped in a village for which he needed permission, and upon receiving the letter he most probably travelled further on.

These letters contain some important information. Florianowicz is the “elder” travelling with a company probably consisting of more than a dozen persons, but not just one family, as in such a case where the documents would have said that he was travelling with his wife and children. The arrival of the group at a fair or in a village seems to be treated as routine, differently than it was in the previous century. The sejm resolutions ordering Gypsies to leave the country, or limiting their freedoms in other ways, had already existed for more than a dozen years. However, the legislation was not consistent here. This is well demonstrated by the second letter received by Florianowicz, which contains a formulation that he and his company should stay “for as short a period of time as allowed by the Crown legislation”⁷ (AGAD: *Zbiór dok. papier.*, no 1618/2). The fact that these documents were addressed to both, lay and clergy persons, and to officials of different ranks, clearly demonstrates that despite earlier sejm decisions and bans, the wandering of Gypsies was still something normal. It was not persecuted *ex officio*, provided that they behaved “decently and modestly,” so long as they respected the length of stay granted by legal regulations.

I have not been able to find the regulation stipulating clearly for what period wandering Gypsies could stay in one place. This was probably regulated by the same rule that regulated the period of stay of other travelling people. The sejm resolution from 1510 stipulated that if loose people do not take up employment as servants or craftsmen within three days after arriving in a city, they will be used for forced labor, such as building fortifications (*Volumina...*, t. I, 1859, 177). The law from 1658, in force in the city of Boćki in Podlasie,

⁷ Translated from Polish: “na czas krótki jako tylko prawa koronne pozwalają.”

stipulated that the city should not let Gypsies stay for longer than three days, and only during the time of fairs. It is very likely that this was a common rule that applied not only in Podlasie. Many local sejmiks banned hosting Gypsies, but, as we can see, travelling was tolerated, especially when they were going to fairs. This was probably the most common reason for Gypsies to travel, going from one fair to the next, where they could trade or offer their skills.

Another four documents of this type can be found in the collection of the former Königsberg archive. They date from the last decade of the 17th century and all provide important information regarding Gypsies. The term “Vlach Gypsies” repeated throughout these documents indicates that there was a considerable migrational flow from Vlachia by the end of the century. The arrival of the Vlach Gypsies gave rise to conflicts between them and the already established Hungarian, Polish, and Lithuanian Gypsies. This is important information showing the divisions within Gypsies themselves, and also indirectly indicating their diversity and distinguishing characteristics, as well as the ethnic awareness of these Gypsy groups. The terms Vlach, Hungarian, Lithuanian, or Polish Gypsies demonstrate their belonging to, or being established in, a given country, which also impacted their self-identification. This also indicates that in their language and culture, certain changes were taking place as a result of the influence of their environment, as well as the terms Polish, Vlach, Lithuanian, or Hungarian, which were not limited to a special connection to a given country, but also pertained to the self-awareness and self-identification of those Gypsies. The Viceroy of Połock, Jan Klepacki, issued a document on March 4, 1693, in which he informed interested parties about the freedom of movement of the Vlach Gypsies, “who by the means of their craft seek to feed themselves.”⁸ The author of the letter also appealed to officials to make sure that they “see no harm come to them from those other Gypsies, the Polish and Lithuanian ones”⁹ (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 2, 17). Two notes made on this document make it all the more significant as they prove the arrival of Gypsies. From the first one, dated April 25

⁸ Translated from Polish: “którzy rzemiosłem swoim wyżywienia szukają.”

⁹ Translated from Polish: “ażeby od drugich Cyganów polskich i litewskich żadnej nie ponosili szkody.”

of the same year, we may deduce that the community of wandering Vlach Gypsies comprised of at least two families. These may have been multi-generational families, as there is no reason to assume that the social organization model of Gypsies at the time was any different from the current one. A year later in mid-May, 1694, another note was made. We learn from it that Gypsies were engaged in crafts during their travelling. Crafts appear to be the occupation thanks to which Vlach Gypsies were well received during their wandering, received permission to move within the property, and were granted protection against possible problems coming from the local Polish and Lithuanian Gypsies. We may expect that the competition introduced by the newcomers, their entering a territory where craft and trade were occupations of the local Gypsies, led to conflicts amongst different Gypsy communities.

An entry in the *Sigillata*¹⁰ from 1685 indicates that the migratory flow from Vlachia intensified by the end of the 17th century, just as the documents from the former archive in Königsberg show. The new arrivals were granted rights similar to those granted to local Gypsies. The following entry in the royal chancellery books gives evidence of this: “That runaway Gypsies from Vlachia should be allowed to stay in towns and attend fairs”¹¹ (*Sigillata*, t. 14, k. 5v). At that point the office of the superior of the Gypsies, appointed by the royal chancellery, had already existed for 30 years. It is not certain whether the Vlach Gypsies were also under his jurisdiction, but at least formally they most likely were. The royal nomination privileges usually defined territorial boundaries of a held office, thus we can assume that all Gypsies, Polish, Lithuanian, and any other, including the Vlach ones, who stayed in the territory covered by a given privilege were under the jurisdiction of a given superior. The difference, or rather distinctiveness, of Gypsies coming from Vlachia was noticed and accepted. It was also known to the state officials of different ranks that there were conflicts between the new arrivals and the local Gypsies. The nature of these conflicts could have been

¹⁰ *Sigillata* were the books of the royal chancellery.

¹¹ Translated from Polish: “Zbiegłych Cyganów z Wołoch aby im wolno po miasteczkach się bawić i na jarmarkach bywać.”

either of economic nature or the result of attempts by local Gypsies to subordinate the newcomers. The documents generally try to protect the Gypsies from Vlachia from the local Gypsies; yet, the concluding remark of the *Sigillata* entry, “without any Gypsies belonging to the Crown”¹² (*ibid.*), may indicate that the authorities treated Gypsies living in the country for a longer period of time (the Crown Gypsies) differently from the newcomers. Information about the Vlach Gypsies can usually be found in the documents from the eastern territories of the Commonwealth. The entries in the *Sigillata* indicate that Gypsy migrants from Vlachia also travelled to the Crown territories, and that conflicts between Gypsies were known to the royal chancellery.

The introductory letter issued on May 8, 1693, by Hieronim Naborowski in Siebierz, a town located about 100 km to the north of Połock, is also very interesting. This document is incomplete, since about one quarter of the document is missing, yet it provides interesting information. We learn that Gypsies who were granted the introductory letter had come to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, fleeing the Turks, and that they were granted safe passage letters, or “passports from great lords,”¹³ and that they lived by the work of their hands. Nieborowski ordered officials subordinate to him to make sure that no harm came to them, and also requested on behalf of Gypsies that “sacred alms, namely bread, be given to these poor people, since they were not allowed on their land to either trade in horses or be fortune-tellers and so they did not learn to do that, but rather earned their living by the work of their hands”¹⁴ (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 2, 19). The request directed by Naborowski to officials demonstrates that Gypsies were not rejected, and as before they were supported with alms. We do not know where these newcomers came from, and whether the reason for their migration was indeed the one they had given. It is possible that the story about running away from the Turks was only a way of gaining favor, and did not reflect the truth.

¹² Translated from Polish: “bez żadnego do Cyganów Koronnych należenia.”

¹³ Translated from Polish: “paszporty od panów wielkich.”

¹⁴ Translated from Polish: “jałmużną świętą, mianowicie chlebem to ubóstwo obdarczyli gdyż onym ani końmi handlować ani też wrózkami bawić w ziemi swojej kędy mieszkali, nie pozwalano ani się tego uczyli ale własną robotą rąk swoich, pracą bawili się.”

Two similar documents can be found in the collection of the Königsberg archive, both of which were issued to the Vlach Gypsies. An introductory letter granted on April 29, 1694, in Kulesze (near Tykocin) states that “Honest Iwan Iwanaszko [—] Vlach Gypsy has paid tax per capita for himself and his whole company to the treasury and thus they should not encounter any troubles in any villages or cities upon showing this document”¹⁵ (*Et.—Min.*, 110 b, Nr 2, 27; DOC. 1). Although the main intention of the Sejm legislation in the second part of the 16th century was to banish Gypsies from the Commonwealth, the legal acts from 1589 and 1590 stipulated that in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Gypsies should pay a tax per capita 15 groszes (see Chapter 4). Although Tykocin was in fact located within the boundaries of the Crown, it was close to the border. The document issued to Iwanaszko by Karwowski proves that the tax per capita was collected from Gypsies there as well, and that possession of the relevant document was of considerable importance, in order to receive permission of safe passage or temporary stay.

There is also another letter, issued at the end of August, 1695, most likely to the same group from Vlachia. This letter was issued in Wiłkomierz (today Ukmerge, in Lithuania), a city about 70 km to the northwest of Vilnius. The author of the letter informs the readers that the Gypsies want to return to their land and that is why they asked for safe passage (*Et.—Min.*, 110 b, Nr 2, 18a). It appears that the Gypsies were going to the south, possibly to Vlachia, or Moldavia, fearing spending the winter months on the Żmudź River due to the harsh local climate (the letter was issued at the end of August).

The Vlach Gypsies often appeared in the northeastern territories of the Commonwealth, as we can surmise based on several documents from the former Königsberg archive. The last act presented here seems to indicate that their arrival was not a single act of migration, but rather there was a seasonal migration route from the south, possibly with the exclusion of the central Poland territories, through

¹⁵ Translated from Polish: “Uczciwy Iwan Iwanaszko [—] Wołoszanin Cygan od siebie i całej kompanii swojej pogłówne do skarbu należące zapłacił, z czego onego i całą kompanię kwituje, i aby żadnej turbacji po wsiach i miasteczkach nie mieli za pokazaniem tego kwitu.”

the Ruthenian territories, and that Gypsies traveled regularly in both directions, from the south as well as back from the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Introductory letters, recommendation letters, or documents confirming good conduct demonstrate that Gypsies could travel relatively freely, and their arrival only rarely led to expulsion or intervention by those responsible for internal security in the country. This was particularly the case in the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The situation looked worse in Lesser Poland (Małopolska), where local sejmiks had already taken up the issue of the Gypsies on many occasions in the 17th and 18th centuries, issuing decisions on their expulsion and accusing them of spying for Turkey, thievery, and robbery. All the examples of accusations and cases with regard to giving shelter to Gypsies on private property known to me come from the Biecz and Kraków acts. These cases must have been treated seriously and harshly in Lesser Poland, since they could lead to the banishment of a person providing shelter to Gypsies. Although it is not clear to what extent the enforcement of these court decisions was effective, the documents demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt that accusations of sheltering Gypsies were treated seriously.

On June 12, 1636, in the Biecz municipal acts, a case was entered that started with the following sentence: "Upon the request of Maliszewski Walkanowski is pronounced an exile."¹⁶ A couple of days earlier the castellan of Sandomierz and starosta of Biecz, Mikołaj Spytek Ligęza, summoned Walkanowski to court due to an accusation by one Maliszewski. The document read: "Who [sues] you, on the basis of the Crown constitutions [---] [so that you are sentenced] to banishment and expelling from the Polish Kingdom and its fiefs and dependencies because you, against the Crown constitutions, dared to keep in the above mentioned village of Ołpiny [at the place of] your residence Philistines or Gypsies expelled and banished from the Polish Kingdom and its dependent countries [---] offering them comfort and care [---] and due to this you deserve the punishment of expulsion and banishment from the Polish Kingdom and its

¹⁶ Translated from Polish: "Walkanowski na prośbę Maliszewskiego ogłoszony banitą."

dependencies”¹⁷ (*Castr. Biec.*, t. 458, 546–548). Walkanowski did not show up for the court trial and thus the court found him guilty and pronounced him an exile, which also meant the confiscation of his property. The act does not leave any doubt with regard to the seriousness of the affair, and the contacts of Walkanowski with Gypsies must have been more than just incidental if the court declared him an exile. We do not know anything more about the nature of the conflict between Walkanowski and Maliszewski. It is possible that Maliszewski simply wanted to appropriate Walkanowski’s property, as the legislation adopted in the previous century gave such a right. It seems to follow from the accusation that the contacts between Walkanowski and the Gypsies were not merely a one-time matter. We do not know how he made his living, but it is possible that he had some business relations with Gypsies, as he lived not far from the border with Hungary. There is nothing in the document that would indicate that Walkanowski ordered thefts and robberies (such cases are known from 16th-century archives), or that the Gypsies sheltered by him were thieves. Walkanowski did not appear before the court, and perhaps he had such close relations with the Gypsies that he simply travelled with them or moved to a different place.

Nineteen years later, in 1655, we find another complaint about sheltering Gypsies in the Biecz records. This is an appeal against a court verdict in a dispute between two parties, Opatkowski and Rozen. The case occupied the attention of the courts for quite a while. Jan Wielopolski, the starosta of Biecz, ordered the “noble Kazimierz Rozen” to personally appear before the court on November 3rd because of accusations against him with regard to “people not worthy of trust, banished from the Kingdom and not having a permanent place of residence[;] what is more, every day moving and wandering

¹⁷ Translated from Polish: “Który ciebie, stosując się do konstytucji koronnych [---] [pozywa, abyś został skazany] na banicję i wywołanie z Królestwa Polskiego i państw jemu podległych o to, że ty przeciwko tymże konstytucjom koronnym śmiałeś we wsi wyżej wymienionej Ołpiny, [w miejscu] twojego zamieszkania, Filistynów czyli Cyganów z Królestwa Polskiego i państw do niego przyłączonych wygnanych i wywołanych trzymać [---] opiekować się nimi i nieść pomoc [---] przez co podpadłeś pod karę banicji i wywołania z Królestwa Polskiego i państw jemu podległych.”

from one place to another, in the village of Stróże [---] you were willing to offer comfort to the mentioned Philistines or Gypsies for half a year and to give them help, despite the legal ban, and since you in fact took care of them and provided them with help, you are considered as an accomplice, which in terms of punishment means similar banishment and expulsion from the Kingdom”¹⁸ (*Castr. Biec.*, t. 470, 611–613; DOC. 2). Rozen was a leaseholder in the village of Stróże, and Bieszna, that Opatkowski was an heir to, is located just several kilometers from it. Neither the indictment, nor the complaint lodged by Opatkowski claim that the Gypsies sheltered by Rozen caused any harm to the property in Bieszna or stole anything. The ground for this court case is the violation of the law against Gypsies. We can assume that this was the direct reason for lodging the report by the heir of Bieszna.

We do not learn anything about the nature of contacts between Rozen and the Gypsies either from the accusation by Opatowski, or from the entire document. It is possible that Rozen, apart from leasing the estate, also had some trade relations with Gypsies. It is clear, however, that if he had had grounds to accuse Rozen of being an accomplice in thefts or robberies, Opatowski would have done so.

One more aspect of this case should be noted. Gypsies are defined as people unworthy of any trust and not having any permanent place of residency, moving every day. There is not any other accusation, such as that of larceny or any other offence; it is their constant moving and the lack of a permanent place of residence that are the main reason for the hostility towards them. The very state of being a Gypsy, a Gypsy-Philistine, or a wanderer is perceived as reprehensible, whereas a person keeping Philistines on their private property runs the risk of being accused of being an accomplice and violating the law (later we can observe considerable changes in this respect).

¹⁸ Translated from Polish: “ludzi niegodnych wiary, wywołanych z Królestwa, nie mających stałego miejsca zamieszkania, więcej, codziennie przenoszących się i wędrujących z miejsca na miejsce, we wsi Stróże [---] przez pół roku byłeś gotów opiekować się mimo zakazu prawnego wymienionymi Filistynami czyli Cyganami i dawać im pomoc, jakoż faktycznie opiekowałeś się i pomoc dawałeś, przez co podpadłeś pod karę współnictwa, to znaczy podobne wygnanie i wywołanie z Królestwa.”

Opatkowski appealed against the verdict by starosta Wielopolski of Biecz to a higher court in Lublin, whereas 17 years later, Jan Wielopolski, at the time already the starosta of Kraków, was himself accused of supporting Gypsies before the Crown court in Lublin. From an entry made on July 23, 1672, we learn that “*delators*”¹⁹ Jan Czeski and Aleksander Żernicki sued Wielopolski as well as the city council of Słomniki,²⁰ which was under his jurisdiction, and took them “to the municipal office of Kraków starosta [—] in respect to the reception and permission to stay in this your city of Słomniki [granted to] the Philistine people, known thieves, vagrants and depraved cheats who lead a life of thieves to the greatest harm of citizens of nobility in the Proszowice *powiat* and fellow-citizens of the city of Słomniki, as well as the provision of support to them as the cause of damage and thefts inflicted upon your neighbors by those Philistines”²¹ (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 99, 2063–2066). Czeski and Żernicki accuse the Gypsies of the theft of “two battle horses of bay color.” The complaint against the city council of Słomniki lodged at the starosta court did not result in arresting the Gypsies and punishing the authorities of Słomniki; for this reason, the plaintiffs appealed to the Crown court in Lublin. We do not know when they lodged the complaint against Wielopolski and the city council of Słomniki. Czeski had lost his horses by the end of August, 1669. The court summons for Wielopolski and the authorities of Słomniki are dated May 30, 1672, which means that he had been trying to convince the city council and then the Kraków starosta to accept his arguments. We do not know what happened later but we can be almost certain that neither Kraków starosta Wielopolski nor the members of the Słomniki city council were banished.

¹⁹ *Delator* (a “denouncer” in Latin) is a person who reports another person who committed a crime to the court.

²⁰ A town about 24 km north of Kraków.

²¹ Translated from Polish: “do urzędu grodzkiego starościńskiego krakowskiego [—] względem ludzi Filistynów albo Cyganów, jawnych złodziei, włóczęgów, występnych oszustów i prowadzących życie złodziejskie na największą szkodę i ucisk obywateli szlachty w powiecie proszowickim i w mieście Słomniki współmieszkających do miasta Słomniki przyjęcia i w tymże mieście waszym sprzyjania i zatrzymania jako przyczynę szkody i kradzieży wyrządzonych swoim sąsiadom przez [—] tychże Filistynów.”

The document presented above accuses the Gypsies of thefts; however, it is not certain whether the Gypsies did indeed steal the horses. Despite the general opinion that they live off stealing (see the testimony by Jadwiga Cyganka), there are only two cases, from 1639 and 1640, that mention Gypsies being caught in the act of stealing something. The municipal books of Lublin contain a testimony that says: "A converted Jew and a Gypsy stole one hundred zlotys before Christmas" (*Act. Lublini carcer.*, 1639–1642, 29v–30). The second case was recorded in Lwów.

The case of Jewka who cut off a money bag and of the first Rom in Lwów

The records of the city of Lwów from 1640 contain an entry with regard to the case of Jewka Cyganka, who was caught stealing red-handed. In this volume we also find reports regarding several other cases where Gypsies appear. The records referring to Jewka are interesting because they include the testimonies of several persons, which, as it seems, well reflect the course of events. At the same time, we encounter a vivid picture of the Lwów market square of the times.

On January 28, 1640, Franciszek Gawrus lodged a complaint against Jewka Cyganka. Due to the fact that he failed to present witnesses of the theft, the case was adjourned. Yet, the court did not have doubts that Jewka committed the crime, since there is an entry in the acts saying that "in the meantime, the accused is intended for bonds," which means that she was kept in custody (*Off. Adt. [Leopol.]*, t. 459, 72). Two days later the plaintiff presented a witness, and then the testimonies of three people were recorded, of which two were from direct witnesses of the theft and a third person who with his servants brought Jewka to the prison. From the testimonies of first-hand witnesses, we learn that the Gypsy woman dexterously "cut" a money bag from a certain nobleman and wanted to flee to the suburbs of Lwów, where other Gypsies lived, which is confirmed by further entries. The first witness testified: "[I am] Zuzanna Szyrkowna. I saw a Gypsy woman taking out a money bag from Franciszek and cutting it off, when she took the money she wanted to go to the suburbs, and I, having seen that, told him that a Gypsy woman cut off

his money bag, and he caught her and took her to an inn; I do not know what he did to her in that inn, because I went back to my ginger breads that I sell”²² (ibid., 74–75; DOC. 3).

The next witness, Stanisław Mankiewicz, citing his wife who saw the incident, confirms that Jewka “cut” the money bag. The testimony of the third witness shows that the Gypsies were trying to prevent Jewka’s arrest by city servants. During a skirmish with the castle *hajduks*, “the Gypsies ripped off her sheepskin coat without fear of shaking her and went away with it”²³ (ibid., 75). As it turned out, it was not about her sheepskin coat, but about what she had hidden in it, probably in one of its pockets. A day later a verdict was passed. An important fragment of it refers to the sheepskin coat: “when she was arrested [---] with city servants, her husband arrived and took her coat so that it was easier to cover up her offence and to take the handsome sum of money under it, and because of this she fell under greater suspicion.”²⁴ Only now we learn that the amount of money stolen was a considerable one. The accused had to return the stolen sum of money and also pay 10 *grzywnas* to the office. The last entry related to this case is from February 6, 1640. We learn that “Maciej Aleksandrowicz, the Gypsy, and his wife Jewka paid for the damages inflicted by them”²⁵ (ibid., 100). As we can see, Jewka was not imprisoned; her husband possessed the necessary amount of cash to pay the fine, apart from returning the money, and to satisfy the injured party’s claims. Jewka’s name does not appear in any further records.

We do not know how Aleksandrowicz the Gypsy and his wife Jewka earned a living; yet, her professionalism in the theft and the

²² Translated from Polish: “Zuzannam Szynkowna. Widziałam, że Cyganka z kieszeni wyjęła z mieszkem pieniądze temu Franciszkowi, i urznęła, i wzięwszy mieszek chciała pójść na przedmieście, ja to widząc powiedziałam mu że ci Cyganka mieszek urznęła z pieniędzmi, on ją uchwycił i wziął do gospody, nie wiem co jej tam czynił w gospodzie bom się ja wróciła do swoich pierników, które sprzedaje.”

²³ Translated from Polish: “Cyganie zdarli kozuch z niej bojąc się, aby jej nie trzęśli i poszli z nim.”

²⁴ Translated from Polish: “gdy była zatrzymana [---] ze sługami grodzkimi nadszedł mąż i wziął od niej kozuch, aby łatwiej osłonić występki, aby pod nim sowite pieniądze złodziejsko wziąć, przez co popadła w większe podejrzenie.”

²⁵ Translated from Polish: “Maciej Aleksandrowicz Cygan, i jego żona (Jewka), zapłacili za wyrządzone szkody.”

case of the sheepskin coat give us food for thought. We also do not know how it became clear that she kept the stolen money in it. Yet, it is rather certain that the husband, taking the coat from her, must have known what it contained and probably communicated with her in Gypsy language, which is not noted in the protocol, but seems to be very likely. The surname “Aleksandrowicz” is known among Gypsies living in the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Podlasie, thus it is possible that Jewka and her husband came from there.

We find several more records referring to Gypsies in this book, none referring to Jewka Cyganka. They are predominantly disputes and accusations of assault and robbery. The figure of Hrycko Cyganik (little Gypsy) appears there several times. These entries are not without their charm and literary value, as, for example, the two entries referring to a quarrel between Anna Rajska and Marcin Cyganik’s wife. The testimony by Stanisław, a servant, was entered on July 29, 1641: “Maierka, the Jewish woman, testified [—] that Cyganik was walking with his wife and that Rajska [woman] as well, and Cyganik said to Rajska [—] ‘would you be so kind,’ and Rajska said, ‘sure, although, [I do not mind] you, but your wife, the bitch, stole ducks from me,’ and Cyganik’s wife slammed her shoulder for these words, and her shawl fell down, but she did not touch her head and did not hit with force”²⁶ (ibid., 1068). Two days later, during the next session, the court decided, probably after hearing the evidence by the witnesses of the incident, that Cyganik’s wife should not be punished since “she did not touch her head”; in other words, she did not really beat up Rajska (ibid., 1076). The relation of the Cyganiks—Hrycko, Marcin and his wife—with the Gypsies is confirmed by the last entry.

On April 30, 1642, a short but significant entry was made in the Łwów city council books. (The sorry state of this book does not always allow us to read the entire text; in this case, the concluding fragment is difficult to make out.) The parties of the dispute are Stanisław Gorczyca and Paweł Rom and Gorczyca demands the return of twenty zlotys, owed to him by the stepfather of Paweł Rom. The

²⁶ Translated from Polish: “zeznała Maierka Żydówka [—] że Cyganik szedł z żoną i ta też Rajska, i rzekł Cyganik do Rajskiej [—] bądź łaskawa, a Rajska rzekła juści, ty jakkolwiek, ale żona twoja suka pokradła mi kaczki, Cyganikowa trzasnęła ją w ramię za one słowa, i zawicie jej spadło ale ją za łeb nie miała i mocą nie biła.”

court decided that the accused would swear by lifting his fingers that “he did not act as a guarantor of the 20 zlotys owed to the plaintiff for grain, on behalf of Hrycko Cyganik, his stepfather”²⁷ (ibid., 1494; DOC. 4). Hrycko Cyganik is Paweł Rom’s stepfather, whereas Stanisław Gorczyca demands that Cyganik’s stepson repay his stepfather’s debt. This entry tells us much about the Gypsies of Lwów, and it is extremely important for the history of Gypsies in Poland. Until now we encountered such terms as “Philistines,” “Egyptians,” and “Gypsies” in the documents. What marks April 30, 1642, as an important date in the history of Gypsies in Poland, is that for the first time the word “Rom” appears in source materials. This word does not appear in later documents until contemporary times, or at least we have no evidence of it. There is no doubt that this is not merely a coincidence. The word “Rom” is related to Gypsies, as Paweł Rom’s stepfather is Hrycko Cyganik. Thus, we can assume that other Cyganiks living in Lwów at the time (e.g., Marcin, the one mentioned in the Lwów acts because of the quarrel between his wife and one Rajska) were Gypsies. But we do not know why some of them (e.g., Jewka and her husband Maciej Aleksandrowicz) are defined as “Cygan,” and Hrycko and Marcin as “Cyganik.” It is possible that Aleksandrowicz, Cyganik, and Rom were treated as surnames, whereas the word “Cygan” next to Alesandrowicz’s name referred to his ethnic belonging. Paweł Rom is the first known person who calls himself “Rom,” yet we cannot say that the Roma awareness or identity had been formed by then, or that they were consciously using this self-identification. We do, however, have a clear sign that the word “Rom” existed and functioned within the community and was used as a term for self-identification. We do not know why Paweł defined himself as Rom and not as Cyganek or Cygan. It is possible that Paweł’s surname was a nickname originally; e.g., it is possible that some non-Gypsy who lived close to the Gypsies and learned a bit of their language, including the word that they used for self-identification within the group, started using it in reference to Paweł or his parents. With time the nickname gained the features of a surname and the Gypsies from Paweł’s family themselves started

²⁷ Translated from Polish: “że za Hrycka Cyganika, ojczyrna swego, actorowi o zł 20 za zboże nie ręczył.”

to use it in this manner. Irrespective of how the term “Rom” came into use and started to appear in documents, we encounter a significant fact in the history of the Gypsy-Roma in the Commonwealth.

These records also give us more information about the Gypsies of Lwów. Jewka Cyganka, together with her husband Maciej Aleksandrowicz Cygan, and the Cyganiks—Hrycko, Marcin, and his wife—as well as Paweł Rom were most likely permanent residents of Lwów. Even if they did not live next to one another and did not form a Gypsy community, they must have been related by business interests and family ties. Probably they had been staying in Lwów for a long time, as commercial ties and business interests with non-Gypsies seem to indicate that. They cannot be newcomers, otherwise their ‘word’ or guarantee would not have been accepted in exchange for goods, and certainly not by somebody from within the group, which followed from the entry under discussion. Regardless of whether Paweł Rom was the guarantor of his stepfather, Hrycko Cyganik, or not, the very lodging of the case by Stanisław Gorczyca meant that such a situation was treated as nothing out of the ordinary.

The Lwów Gypsies, at least those mentioned in the Lwów municipal records, were engaged in trade. They were also recognized as business partners, as people just like others in the multiethnic and multicultural mosaic of Lwów at the time. Nowhere in the Lwów records can we find evidence that they were believed to be thieves simply because they were Gypsies. Even the case of Jewka, the Gypsy woman, a clear case of a theft, was closed after the claims were paid, and did not result in banishment or imprisonment. The Gypsies, at least those mentioned in the municipal acts of Lwów, appear to be “familiar, one’s own,” a permanent element of the city’s mosaic, the people one lived next to, had business and possibly also social contacts with. They were not assimilated, yet they had considerably adapted to local circumstances and the society of Lwów. They preserved not only their inter-group relations but also their distinguishing features. A sentence from the testimony of one of the witnesses in the case of theft from Franciszek Gawrus clearly illustrates this: “Lady, look, this Gypsy woman has taken out a red money bag from him

and cut it off”²⁸ (*Off. Adv [Leopol]*, t. 459, 74). Jewka most likely stood out because of her dress. The person seeing this offence did not say that “this thief has taken out,” but “this Gypsy woman has taken out,” thus he immediately identified her as a Gypsy woman. This implies that the persons mentioned in the Lwów acts, *Cygan* or *Cyganik*, were markedly different from non-Gypsies, even though they were rather close, familiar people. But these distinguishing features were accepted, fell “within the norm,” and did not go beyond a certain margin of acceptability or tolerance, similarly to the distinguishing features of the Jews, Armenians, or Tartars living in Lwów of that time.

From this period we know about a dozen cases of disputes between Gypsies, which were referred to non-Gypsy institutions and courts of different ranks for settlement, whereas the Gypsies of Lwów must have settled their disputes within their own community, since there are no entries of this nature in municipal books. Most likely they had some sort of institution of their own, a court, a leader or a person with considerable authority who settled such disputes within the group. Indirectly this also indicates that the Gypsies of Lwów must have been a well-integrated community and not merely a loose group of individuals or families.

Gypsy disputes

Disputes between Gypsies are a fundamentally different issue. The document from 1595 discussed in Chapter 2 contained a verdict by a Gypsy court in reference to a Gypsy. The acts into which the decision of the Gypsy court was entered were treated as an important confirmation of the Gypsy court’s jurisdiction. It had a very practical dimension in that it allowed an appeal to the authorities when prosecuting a person charged by a Gypsy court.

Many more disputes between Gypsies can be found in the 17th-century acts. On October 1, a complaint by a Gypsy named Łukaszewicz against a Gypsy named Roślankiewicz was entered into the acts of the city of Mścisław. According to the document, the latter burgled

²⁸ Translated from Polish: “Pani patrzaj jeno oto Cyganka wyjęła temu w czerwieni mieszek, i już go urznęła.”

Łukaszewicz's property together with Cossacks and "Muscovy" (probably some armed division from the Moscow state, whose border was not far from Mścisław). During this incident, Rosłankowicz stole two horses. Two days later he broke into Łukaszewicz's property again. This time he took "a silver cup that had cost thirty zlotys, a silver [horse] harness on a silk band that had cost seventy zlotys, ten rubles in kopecks in cash, and what is more, he took into captivity my father named Łukasz Markiewicz with his wife and two children and my sisters, only I myself and one of my sisters barely escaped" (*Akty...*, t. XXXIV, 1909, 310–311).

We do not know the reasons for this assault; probably some sort of dispute or financial claims caused Rosłankowicz to attack Łukaszewicz and burgle his property. The fact of the kidnapping of the plaintiff's family members, his father with his wife and daughters, points to that. The father and the rest of the family were kidnapped most likely so that they could be forced to work for Rosłankowicz. Łukaszewicz, the injured party, did not seek justice before the Gypsy court, nor did he summon his kinsmen in order to deal with Rosłankowicz. Both the plaintiff and the accused were Gypsies. Both, however, had surnames that indicated their being settled in that city. Łukaszewicz lodged his complaint at the city court and there is no mention of the Gypsy court, which demonstrates a high level of cultural adaptation. However, full assimilation did not take place since both of them were identified as Gypsies, even if we do not know what their "Gypsiness" was based on.

Another very valuable source of information is a collection of acts regarding robberies in the Wyzów Forest. Thanks to these documents we learn a great deal about the relations between Gypsy groups. These documents date from the last decade of the 17th century. All the conflicts are among Gypsies and in fact are limited to them. They go beyond the Gypsy community only in the sense that Gypsies referred their issues and disputes to a non-Gypsy court. This collection, from the former archive in Königsberg, is special because it presents a rather broad picture of these relations. The collection contains thirteen documents, of which four refer to robberies in the Wyzów Forest, five for various disputes and their settlement, and four representing mainly letters addressed to authorities of various levels

seeking help in capturing runaways or Gypsies who committed an offence against other Gypsies. All the acts belonging to this collection date from 1693–1697, and they all were issued most likely in the northeast territories of the Commonwealth.

The Wyzów Forest case started with a robbery and a complaint from the damaged party to the court. A letter issued on May 25, 1694,²⁹ by the authorities of the city of Kowel (now northern Ukraine), addressed to authorities of different levels in the royal cities, states that the Vlach Gypsies, Hryhor and Wasyl, filed a complaint against the Hungarian Gypsies, Matyia, Arsen, and others, who attacked them in the Wyzów Forest and robbed them of many belongings, including six horses and a considerable sum of money and property: “sixty zlotys, one silver horse harness, three crimson *kontuszes*,³⁰ silver bracelets, a Turkish turban, vessels for [tin-smithing and] black-smithing, three wrought iron carts, and that they tied the plaintiffs and their wives to trees” (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 2, 15). Considerable losses and obliterations of the text make it impossible to read the entire document issued by the royal authorities. The plaintiffs appeared with the received document in other cities as well, we know at least in Szadów,³¹ on the Żmudź River (in Lithuania). Thanks to their use of the document, we can fill in some of the missing details of the incident. We can see that the injured party did not limit themselves to complaints to the royal office, but also took actions aimed at seeking justice and making up for their losses. On September 3rd of the same year, the authorities of Szadów issued a letter referring to the Kowel document, citing a fragment mentioning the complaint. We learn that the Mitygas, the injured party, brought two witnesses of the assault in the Wyzów Forest before the office in Szadów. Both testified that they were present at the site of the incident and can confirm the legitimacy of the Mityga brothers’ claims. We cannot be sure of

²⁹ This is the most likely date, due to the fact that the document is partly damaged, part of the date could not be made out.

³⁰ *Kontusz* is a type of outer garment worn by Polish, Hungarian, and Lithuanian male nobility.

³¹ Szadów is a town currently located in eastern Lithuania.

the motivations behind their testifying against the attackers, since the witnesses also took part in this assault, but a dispute with regard to dividing the loot is one of the possibilities. From this document we learn that the main accused party appeared in court but denied his part in the robbery. He also agreed that if it turned out that he, Auryła Arsen, was guilty, he was ready to accept any punishment and to “offer his neck,” that is, be punished by death (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 2, 28–29 and 18). The Mitygas repeated once again under oath that “Auryła, commonly called Arsen, robbed us with others in the Wyzów Forest,”³² and the judges decided that “after such an oath he must be punished by death as a bandit.”³³ Whereas in return for the stolen goods “we rule that the mentioned Mitygas should have his [Arsen’s] wife with his children and servants as slaves and also have whatever is found of the equipment, goods, horses, stolen items [and] carts”³⁴ (*ibid.*, 18). The case was entered into the records and its copy and the sentence signed by the *wójt* of Szadów was given to the Mitygas. Yet, there is a surprising addition to that document written in the same hand and on the same day. What we learn from it is that Arsen admitted his guilt after all and committed himself to compensate the losses inflicted by him upon the Mitygas. Probably after hearing the verdict, in an attempt to save his life, he admitted to the crime enumerating all the things that he received after the division of the loot, and so the document states that “until Arsen can repay all this money mentioned here, he should serve the Mitygas, serve them with his wife and children and mother and servants”³⁵ (*ibid.*, 18). So Arsen not only admitted to the robbery, but also gave the names of his accomplices, “with whom he committed the robbery, that is,

³² Translated from Polish: “Auryła przezwiskiem Arsen, jako właśnie rozbił nas z drugimi, na puszczy wyzowskiej.”

³³ Translated from Polish: “po takowej przysiędze sam na gardło ma być karan jako rozbójnik.”

³⁴ Translated from Polish: “żona jego z dziećmi, z czeladzią i cokolwiek znajdzie się sprzętu jego, dobra koni, fantów [i] wozów tym pomienionym Mitygaom przysądzamy i za niewolników oddajemy.”

³⁵ Translated from Polish: “za te wszystkie pieniądze tu pomienione nim się wypłaci Arsen tedy ma służyć Mitygaom, tedy ma służyć sam z żoną, z dziećmi, i matką i z czeladzią.”

Petr Matyias, Bogdan Koncewicz with his brothers”³⁶ (ibid., 18). We also learn that the latter ones also stole introductory letters issued by the hetman and chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The testimony by Arsen was crucial for the attempts of the Mitygas to capture and bring his accomplices to court. At least one of them was captured; however, he was not punished because he managed to flee. The “wanted” circular issued by deputy-starosta of Wiłkomierz is known. It refers to one of the robbers mentioned by Arsen, Bogdan Koncewicz, and states: “I announce [---] that a Gypsy named Bohdan Koncewicz, being accused by other two Gypsies of robbery, for which he had been imprisoned at the Wilkomierz court of His Royal Majesty [---] ran away from the prison to avoid punishment”³⁷ (*Et.-Min.*, 110 b, Nr 2, 16).

The Mitygas’ troubles were not limited to the robbery by Arsen and his accomplices. We have evidence that two years later they reached a settlement with another group of Hungarian Gypsies, who also had attacked and robbed them in the Wyzów Forest. The list of stolen items as well as the dates on the documents indicate that this case is not related to the one from two years earlier. The following document suggests that a complaint was lodged, and help was granted in capturing the perpetrators. Already in the first sentence the perpetrators admit their guilt: “I Hrehory Miruta and I Czokay Miruta together with our sons and our Company that was with us at the time with this letter affirm freely, that we, Hungarian Gypsies, on being accused of a regular robbery in the Wyzów Forest of Vlach Gypsies [---] Hrehory and Wasili Mitigs and Piotr Czerniewski [?] of taking as a result of this robbery horses, carts, money in cash, a silver harness, dresses, tin-smith and metalwork vessel, of which items there were found at our place a blue *kontusz*³⁸ with a crimson damask border,

³⁶ Translated from Polish: “z kim na ten czas rozbijał, to jest Petr Matyias, Bogdan Koncewicz ze Bracią swoją.”

³⁷ Translated from Polish: “Oznajmuję [---] co Cyganin jako się nazywał Bohdan Koncewicz, będący od drugich Cyganów o rozbójstwo obwiniony za co we dworze Jego Królewskiej mości wiłkomierskim był w turmie osadzony [---] nie chcąc się sprawić z więzienia uciekł.”

³⁸ *Kontusz* was a type of outer garment worn by the nobility.

an anvil for craft, belonging to them”³⁹ (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 2, 24). The phrase “of which items there were found at our place” indicates that somebody searched the Mirutas’ place, probably not lawlessly but with permission of the court or the owner of the property where they were staying. The perpetrators were found, or rather the Mitygas’ accusation, that they had been robbed by the Mirutas, was confirmed. We also learn that what had been found at their place was returned to the injured party, which was followed by a settlement of the conflict between them: “then we returned those things in the year one thousand six hundred ninety six to the above mentioned Vlach Gypsies and have made peace with them forever [---] not bearing a grudge or any intention of revenge against them, after paying one hundred *kopas* of Lithuanian *groszes*”⁴⁰ (*ibid.*). In the collection of the former archive in Königsberg, there is another document of almost identical content (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 2, 25; DOC. 5). This is not a description of the discussed document; it appears to be a copy prepared in case the first one was lost or stolen, or it was prepared for another member of the Mityga family (the injured party).

The above discussed documents introduce much new information to what we know regarding Gypsies in the northeastern part of the Commonwealth. The Mitygas were not poor people; both the information about the robbery by Arsen and his company, as well as the assault by Miruta and the list of robbed goods testify to this. We do not know whether the Mityga family lived there permanently, but it is clear that the route of their travelling went through the Wyzów

³⁹ Translated from Polish: “Ja Hrehory Miruta i ja Czokay Miruta i z synami swymi i Companią na ten czas przy mnie były czynimy tym listem dobrowolnym naszym iż my będąc obwinieni, Cyganie węgierscy o rozbój stały w puszczy wizanskiej Cyganow wołoskich [---] Hrehorego i Wasilia Mitigów i Piotra Czerniewskiego[?] o zebranie przy tym rozboju koni, wozów, pieniędzy gotowych, rzędzika srebrnego, sukien, naczyń konwisarskiego i ślusarskiego, z których tych rzeczy u nas pokazało się mianowicie kontusz półgranatni z listwą adamaszkową szkarłatną, kowadło do rzemiosła ich należące.”

⁴⁰ Translated from Polish: “tedy my te rzeczy wróciliśmy w roku tysiąc sześćset dziewięćdziesiątym szóstym, miesiąca maja dwudziestego szóstego, dnia wysz pomienionym Cyganom wołoskim i wiecznie się z onemi pogodzili [---] nie zostawiając w sobie do nich żadnego przystępu do pomsty pod zapłaceniem sta kop groszy liczby litewskich.”

Forest, since they were robbed in this forest twice. This means that they moved freely between the locales of Żmudź and the Duchy of Livonia, as well as further in the south. They had horses and carts; thus, it is likely that they led a wandering life, interrupting their travels only for the wintertime. Indirectly this is confirmed by the document issued in Kowel, which notes that the Hungarian Gypsy robbers tied Mitygas' wives to the trees after robbing them. Thus, we know that the Mitygas were travelling with their wives, and possibly with children, which is a clear sign of nomadic lives. Yet, they were travelling along a certain well-defined territory, which they chose as the place of their stay and earning their living. Their travelling is not aimless wandering, and the directions of their travels are not more or less accidental.

It is difficult to establish today where the Wyzów Forest mentioned in the documents is. It may be a forest complex near Wize (today in eastern Lithuania), which is not far from the cities in Żmudź and the Duchy of Livonia, mentioned in the documents. It must be remembered, however, that the first document referring to the robbery was issued in Kowel (today in the northeast of Ukraine). Thus, it is more likely that the Wyzów Forest is a large forest complex not far from the town of Wyzna (today in central Belarus). Indeed, a road connecting the Lithuanian and Ruthenian territories went through this town, whereas in Kowel there was a river crossing over the Turia River, and from there the road went to central Ruthenia, in the direction of Moldavia. It is possible that the Mitygas were going to the south, to Ukraine, or even to Transylvania and Vlachia.

All the documents referring to the Mitygas mention "equipment and vessels for tin-smithing and blacksmithing" among the robbed goods. There is no doubt that their professional occupation and the source of their wealth was blacksmithing, tin-smithing, and making equipment to be sold at fairs and in estates along their route. The Mitygas were Vlach Gypsies and lived in a group rather than as individual families. The evidence for this are the documents that repeatedly mention the names of the three brothers, as well as the information that three carts were stolen from them. We can assume that they travelled with their families and each family had one cart, horses, equipment, and they lived, worked, and travelled in a group.

The Mitygas must have had contacts as well as possible business interests with the local Gypsies, despite the conflict and the attacks in the forest. The Mitygas knew those who robbed them well enough to identify them in their complaint about the robbery, or they at least knew the local Gypsies well enough to learn the names of the perpetrators. At least one of the participants of the attack on the Mitygas, Arsen's accomplice and later a witness for the prosecution, was one of the Gypsies who had been settled in Lithuania for a long time. The surname Marcinkiewicz is popular among Gypsies living in the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, especially on the Radziwiłłs' property.

The Mitygas, Vlach Gypsies, were robbed by Hungarian Gypsies. We can assume that the Mitygas had some business with the Hungarian Gypsies as the latter were in contact with Polish and Lithuanian Gypsies. In the case of the two witnesses, Marcinkiewicz and Czerwicki [?], one was a brother-in-law and the other was a servant of the Hungarian Gypsy, Arsen. In general, it seems that the conflict between the parties mentioned in the documents was of economic and financial nature, such as selling their produce and skills, rather than a regular robbery. No document seems to indicate that the Hungarian Gypsies, Arsen and the Mirutas, were simply bandits who robbed travelers. Otherwise, the courts would have probably treated their case differently and the dispute would not have ended in settlement and compensation. The entire conflict clearly concerns the Gypsy community, yet the complaints are lodged in non-Gypsy courts. This indicates that the Polish, Lithuanian, Vlach, and Hungarian Gypsies had not created their own institutions responsible for settling disputes, despite all the common interests and contacts. They constituted individual groups, at least in the case of the Vlach and Hungarian Gypsies. For this reason it was necessary to employ an independent institution under non-Gypsy jurisdiction that would play the role of a relatively independent arbitrator. This also suggests the lack of a considerable distance between Gypsies and the rest of the population of the Commonwealth, which was characteristic of the 19th century.

The lack of a Gypsy institution that could settle disputes between different Gypsy groups also indirectly indicates that there were clear

boundaries between Gypsy groups, and that they were stronger than the barriers dividing the Gypsies from the non-Gypsy community. These documents demonstrate that apart from the Gypsies that had arrived earlier and were referred to as Polish and Lithuanian Gypsies, indicating a considerable level of cultural adaptation, Gypsies from Vlachia and Hungary were also arriving in the Commonwealth. The territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became the place of their rivalry and competition.

One of the discussed documents tells us that introductory letters had been taken from the Mitygas and the perpetrator promised to give them back. It is likely that the documents in question were the letters signed by Kazimierz Jan Sapieha, the voivode of Vilnius and Grand Hetman of Lithuania, the chancellor of Lithuania of the time. We do not know these documents, but the attempts to retrieve them indicate that they were most likely authentic. The Mitygas must have indeed been resourceful people, not just well-off and good craftsmen, if they managed to get access to the highest level of the social and official ladder of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and receive the support of the chancellor and hetman-voivode.

Some of the surnames mentioned in the acts referring to the Mitygas and the robberies in the Wyzów Forest also appear in other documents from this period. They are not related to the robberies in the forest, but give evidence of the financial relations of the persons involved in the conflicts between the Mitygas and Arsen as well as the Mirutas.

Two of these acts are dated 1694, and both are settlements between Gypsies. On May 28, 1694, "foreign people, Gypsies, having come as to the Magdeburg Law, to the Wójt Acts of Merecz, the city of His Royal Majesty, made a settlement amongst themselves"⁴¹ (*Et.-Min.*, IIob, Nr 2, 14). There is another act of settlement from the same year. It is difficult to understand the crux of this dispute, as the document is written in poor Polish, and it is likely that the Gypsies themselves wrote it. We learn that the root of this dispute was a highway robbery.

⁴¹ Translated from Polish: "Ludzie cudzoziemcy, Cyganie, przyszedłszy jako do prawa Magdeburskiego, do Akt Wójtowskich Miasta Króla Jegomości Merecza, między sobą ugodę czynili."

One Gypsy, Szoszui, owed six thalers to another Gypsy, Wasyl, and since the sum was probably not repaid on time, Wasyl decided to take the money back by force. As a result of the robbery, Szoszui, the debtor, lost “a blue *żupan*⁴² lined with dormice [fur], one hundred and thirty silver buttons and a wolf color horse worth seven *thalers* and another crimson *żupan*, for a pair of horses and a pair of Turkish boots worth twelve *tynf*s”⁴³ (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 2, 22).

In the margins of this text we find a sentence that indicates that despite the fact that the settlement was made between Gypsies and not in an office, but probably at home or at their camp, an official was asked to stamp it with a seal. Next, the witnesses are mentioned, at least one of whom is a Gypsy, whose name we encounter in a different document issued two years later, where he is referred to as a Hungarian Gypsy. The injured party in this case was a Vlach Gypsy. Since one of the witnesses was a Hungarian Gypsy, we may assume that the remaining two witnesses were also Gypsies, although it is also possible that they were non-Gypsy, impartial witnesses to the settlement.

On July 1, 1697, a settlement between a Gypsy woman, Magdalena Stanisławowiczowa and Hrehory Mityga was made: “At the office of the court of His Royal Majesty in Zagory, appearing in person, the Gypsy woman, Magdalena Stanisławowiczowa, a widow, with Hrehory Mityga, a Vlach Gypsy, made a settlement”⁴⁴ (*Et.–Min.*, 110 b, Nr 2, 21). Zagory (more precisely, Żagory) is a city in the Żmudź region, to the north of Szawle, lying next to the border with Courland (today, Žagare in Lithuania, next to the border with Latvia). From this document it follows that Hrehory Mityga tried to cheat Magdalena Stanisławowiczowa, requesting the payment of the debt made by her husband or some other close relative that had already been repaid. Stanisławowiczowa must have been able to prove that Mityga's claims were ungrounded, since as a result of the trial at the court in Żagory,

⁴² *Żupan* was a long lined garment worn by the nobility.

⁴³ *Tynf* or *tymf* was a common name for Polish silver zloty coins.

⁴⁴ Translated from Polish: “Na Urzędzie we Dworze Jego Królewskiej Mości Zagorskim Oczewisto postanowiwszy się, Magdalena Stanisławowiczowa Cyganka wdowa ugodę z Hrehorym Mitygą Cyganem Wołoskim uczynioną.”

Mityga “on the intercession of many Gypsies gave as a settlement to Magdalena Stanisławowiczowa five minted thalers in cash”⁴⁵ (ibid.).

The acts of settlement presented here enhance our knowledge with regard to the Gypsies in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with important details. It appears that the majority of the acts are related directly or indirectly to the Mitygas, to be precise to Hrehory Mityga, and the group of which he was a head or elder. We also see that apart from earlier newcomers, Gypsies from Hungary and Vlachia start to appear in the Commonwealth. We do not know how numerous these groups were, but the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became the place of their rivalry and competition, and sometimes also of their domination by local Gypsies. The group of Gypsies that arrived from Vlachia, and whose leader in the 90s of the 17th century was Hrehory Mityga, appears to have settled permanently in the northeastern territories of the Commonwealth. Moreover, their settlement was not literal, as they were travelling within a well-defined territory. Let us have a closer look at the map of the travels of Mityga and his group. Merecz, Szadów, Wiłkomierz, Zagory, and Stare Zagory are all cities of Żmudź. One of the cities located further on to the south is Kowel. The cities where the documents were issued demonstrate that the Mitygas and their group were moving from Troki (Trakai in Lithuanian, a city about 30 km to the west of Vilnius) along the territory of Żmudź and further on to the east and north to the Duchy of Livonia and Courland. We can also say that Żmudź was the main area where they lived and travelled.

We also know from the acts related to attacks on the Mitygas and their settlement with Mirutas that Hungarian Gypsies had been present in this region at least for some time. Many Gypsies also lived in Transylvania, which was a multi-ethnic, religiously and linguistically diversified land. This is why both the Gypsies that defined themselves as “Hungarian” as well as those that called themselves “Vlach” could have originated from the same region, Transylvania. This would also explain to some degree the closeness between them in the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, despite their disputes and

⁴⁵ Translated from Polish: “za interpozycją wielu Cyganów dał z ugody Magdalenie Stanisławowiczowej gotowymi pięć talarów bitych.”

conflicts. Both of these communities are distinct from the local Polish and Lithuanian Gypsies living there in terms of their way of life and level of mobility. Despite the considerable amount of travelling, the newcomers from Vlachia were well adopted to the local conditions, culture, language and rules. Their adaptation went so far that even in internal affairs amongst Gypsies, they approached the local non-Gypsy authorities for settlement of disputes or assistance. This might indicate that they recognized them as important and trustworthy, also from the Gypsy perspective. However, the practical dimension was probably more important here. In order to enforce a settlement or court verdict, one needed a relevant act that had legal force and gave grounds for its enforcement.

We find three more documents from the end of the 17th century in this collection of acts. One of them is difficult to understand not least due to its state. The remaining two are letters issued as assistance in capturing culprits. Thus, a non-Gypsy office became an institution where Gypsies sought aid in attaining justice. The document illustrates that Gypsies requested assistance in capturing those who committed crimes against their own Gypsy group (I presented the same situation already when discussing the documents referring to Piotr of Rotemberg and his group) (*Et.-Min.*, 110 b, Nr 3, 14). The document is rather confusing. It is difficult to make out from it more than that a Gypsy was robbed in Nowa Wieś by his servant, who took his horse and ran away at night. The author of the document implores “kind lords,” probably the owners of properties or officials, to help the holder of this letter, who “cares not so much about the servant as about the horse”⁴⁶ (*ibid.*).

Also another document, issued on May 27, 1693, in Niemokszty (in Żmudź) refers to the pursuit of Gypsies who had stolen horses. The document states: “Piotr Awryłowicz, a *wójt* and elder among Gypsies with his brothers as well as [their] wives, having taken away horses in the town of Niemokszty [---] ran away at night”⁴⁷ (*Et.-Min.*, 110 b,

⁴⁶ Translated from Polish: “nie idzie o sługę tak bardzo, jako o konia.”

⁴⁷ Translated from Polish: “Piotr Awryłowicz wójt i starszy Cygan pod bytność swą i z bracią swoją także z żonami, odebrawszy konie w Niemoksztach miasteczku [---] nocnym sposobem uciekł.”

Nr 2, 23.) The horses were taken away by one of the Gypsies in Niemokszty. He did not run away far enough, however, as the horses were taken away from him in Bolsie, a town nearby. The document does not state clearly whether it was Awryłowicz who, running away at night, stole the horses, or whether it was someone from his group. We also do not know whether the culprits were punished or just set free. The addition to the document about getting the horses back could suggest that they were simply released. The surname of the Gypsy *wójt*, Awryłowicz, is similar to other surnames from this region, and may suggest that this is a group of Lithuanian or Polish Gypsies who had been living there for a long time. It is also possible that he had something in common with Arsen Auryła, the Hungarian Gypsy, known from the acts referring to the robberies of the Mitygas in the Wyzów Forest. The sentence referring to their wives may suggest that this was a group that was not properly settled, but living in tents and carts.

A comparison of the names appearing in the documents discussed in this sub-chapter may help to paint a clearer picture. The name that appears most often is that of Hrehory Mityga, and we also know that he was the elder or head of the group of Vlach Gypsies. He had at least two brothers, Wasyl and Mikołaj, with whom he travelled, probably with the purpose of earning money by tin-smithing, black-smithing, and trade. The group led by Hrehory Mityga was not limited to his brothers and their families. In different places and in different circumstances we also encounter names of persons related to Mityga and probably belonging to his group. The list of Hungarian Gypsies is longer. We know for certain that Auryła Arsen (or Arseni), Petr Matyias, Hrehory Miruta, and Czokay Miruta (or Czokui) are Hungarian Gypsies, and together with them Bogdan Koncewicz and Wasyl Czerwicki, Auryła Arsen's brother-in-law, took part in the robberies. It is not clear whether they were also Hungarian Gypsies, but this is likely, despite their Polish- or Ruthenian-sounding names and surnames). It is not clear if Arsen was the leader of the group, but the fact that he was the leader of the robbery in the forest may point to that. Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, who served Arsen, almost certainly was a Polish Gypsy. His surname is known and appears many times in the Radziwiłł acts; it was the surname of some Gypsies from Mir

and probably other cities on the Radziwiłł's property. The dividing line between Polish and Hungarian Gypsies was not that considerable if a Polish Gypsy lived with a group of Hungarian Gypsies, even if he was just a servant. Mityga, the Vlach Gypsy, presented the same Marcinkiewicz as a witness in his accusation, which means that Vlach Gypsies also had contacts and some forms of cooperation with Polish Gypsies. Other documents seem to confirm this as well. The surnames of the Hungarian Gypsies do not sound particularly Hungarian; in fact, they are not that different from the surnames of Vlach Gypsies. This may confirm the assumption that they also came from Transylvania, where Vlach Gypsies had been staying. On the other hand, a Polish name does not necessarily mean that a Gypsy using it was not a Hungarian or Vlach Gypsy. He could have adopted this name at some point, simply assuming that it would be beneficial for him because of the way he earned his living, or for official or legal reasons so that he would not be taken for a foreigner. Both groups, the Vlach and Hungarian Gypsies, had contacts and connections with Polish Gypsies and their relations were closer. The distance between Vlach and Hungarian Gypsies appears to have been greater.

The multiple facets of the relations between the persons mentioned in the documents shows that the Gypsies living at the time in the northeastern territories of the Commonwealth were connected, despite their conflicts, disputes, robberies and settlements, by various business interests and financial relations. If ethnic barriers between the different groups had been very strong, this would not have been possible. What follows, is that despite a strong sense of affiliation with the place from where they had come or where they had lived, and despite the clear boundaries of each group, strong ethnic barriers had not yet formed. Thus, there were no prejudices and stereotypes with regard to other Gypsies. What follows, the Gypsies living in the northeastern territories of the Commonwealth formed rather open groups, open first of all to inter-Gypsy contacts, but also to contacts with non-Gypsies. The fact that they were often coming back to courts in cases of disputes between persons or families belonging to different groups implies that this form of seeking justice did not violate internal 'Gypsy' rules. Either they were not yet fully formulated, or they were not as rigid as the contemporary internal Gypsy code is, or

else such course of action was not perceived as being against Gypsy rules. In any case, this is yet another piece of evidence that the distance between them and non-Gypsies was not as considerable as one might assume and that it started to deepen only with the passage of time.

We should also note one more detail. The majority of the names used are typical for the local population: Hrehory, Wasil, Iwan, Bogdan, Magdalena, and Piotr are all common names for this region. Names such as Katy, Auryła, Sawa, and Kryscius are more associated with Transylvania or Vlachia, which probably means that they came from those regions. What can we say, however, about such surnames as Gyrga, Mataki, Mityga, and Miruta? The surname Mirga is popular among Gypsies living in the south of Poland and in Slovakia. This is a trace of evidence that the Mirgas came through Slovakia from Hungary. I also believe that such names as Gyrga, Małaki, Mityga, as well as Miruta also originate from the same territory, even though some of the holders of these surnames define themselves in the Commonwealth as Hungarian and others as Vlach Gypsies.

To conclude, I would like to once again emphasize and accentuate the most significant elements of the documents discussed in this chapter.

- 1) The majority of the documents discussed here come from the eastern part of the country. This can partially be explained by the losses in the archival resources related to the Crown. However, it is clear that in the eastern part of the country Gypsies were better received or found more favorable conditions, both in terms of the attitude of the local population towards them as well as the opportunities for earning a living.
- 2) The source materials demonstrate that important divisions took place within the people called "Gypsies." Information about settled people comes usually from the south of Poland, and these documents usually speak of people living in villages and their "Gypsiness" is usually limited to their surnames. There is no information that would reflect any features of their Gypsy ethnicity. Records coming from the eastern part of the Commonwealth paint a different picture. There, the fact of being settled does not always

imply full assimilation and rejection of “Gypsiness,” understood as an element of one’s identity as well as a feature noticed by the surrounding non-Gypsy community.

- 3) The term “Gypsy” more and more clearly denoted a nomad in the lands of the Crown. However, in the east of the country, in the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, it denoted both wanderers as well as settled people living in families or forming larger communities, distinguished as a separate ethnic group.
- 4) Despite the existing legislation ordering Gypsies to leave the country and banning property owners from providing them shelter, the wandering Gypsies received introductory letters, and not only in the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but also in the territories of the Crown.
- 5) By the end of this century, a considerable inflow of newcomers, Gypsy migrants from Vlachia, takes place. These new arrivals predominantly go in the direction of the eastern parts of the country, which may imply that they were well-informed with regard to which parts of the country are better disposed towards Gypsies. Indirectly, this may also imply that Gypsies from Vlachia were in contact with local Gypsies, and so received this information. This is an important conclusion as it indicates that the dividing lines between Gypsies of different origins were not very strong. Also, the fact that these Gypsies were granted introductory letters that gave them an opportunity to travel as well as engage in trade and craft, mainly black-smithing and tin- and copper-smithing, meant that they were not perceived as depraved, vicious people.
- 6) Apart from the Vlach and Hungarian Gypsies, the acts also mention Polish and Lithuanian Gypsies. These two latter groups illustrate the processes that had been taking place for several decades within the communities that limited the scope of their travels to the eastern parts of the Commonwealth. We do not know when the first Hungarian Gypsies arrived there, possibly together with the Gypsies from Vlachia. Despite the differences between the groups, there were also various forms of cooperation and relations. However, no supra-group institutions yet formed, which is well illustrated by the fact that conflicts between these groups were settled by state, rather than Gypsy courts.

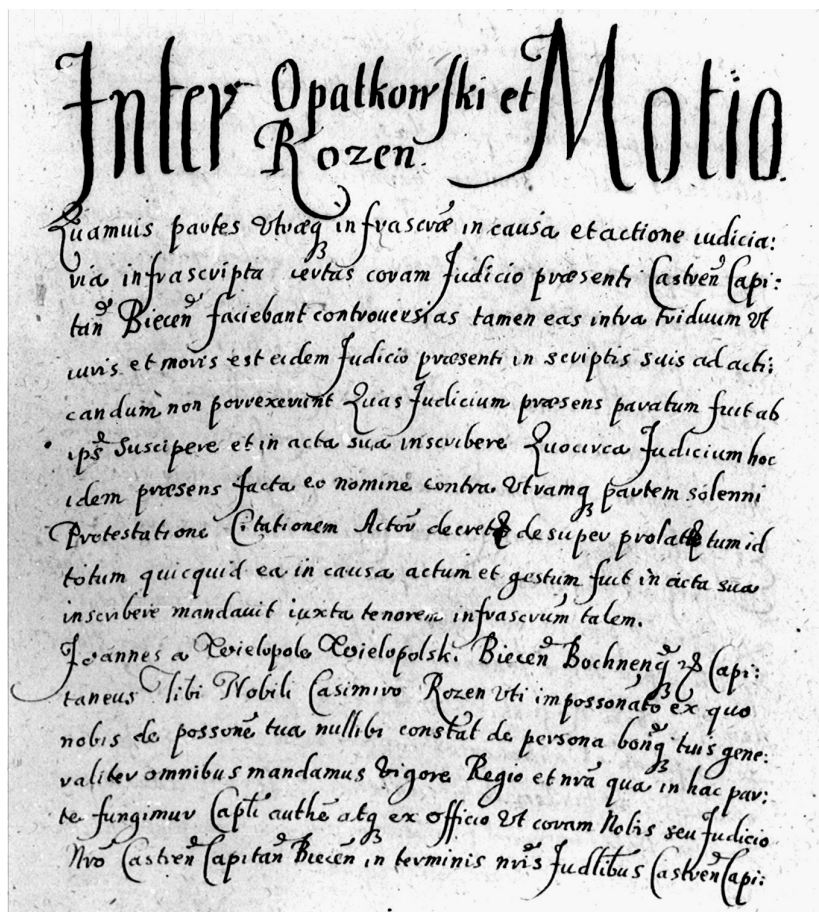
- 7) Providing shelter to Gypsies in the Crown territories often led to accusations and demands of banishment. Yet, banishment verdicts were not enforced, at least we cannot claim otherwise on the basis of the available court acts. Moreover, we do not know of any such verdicts from the eastern parts of the country.
- 8) For the first time on record, the word “Rom” appears. Although we cannot see this case as purely accidental, there is not yet evidence of the formation of a Roma ethnic awareness.

DOCUMENTS

127
 Wtorek 10 94 die 29^{ty} m^{ia} Wtorek Iwan Iwanaszko
 Wtorek Cygar od Siebie y całej kompanii swoich
 Towarze dowarba nalezge zaplatit z tego onego y
 panie Switule y aby zadaly turbaeney po wsiach y
 wstorkach niemieli zapokaramiem Kogo Kowitu, Naio
 a legnity niemy ychy wlasna podpisuje. Nigalsiz w kalendaru
 bawer Sie gas cenna
 Jozef Antoni Janowski ucculitor
 Jozef Janowski Karna Swodzielego
 Jozefowski Karna Swodzielego

DOC. 1 · 29.04.1694. The receipt of payment of the head tax issued to Iwan Iwanaszko, the Gypsy.

Etats-Ministerium, 110 b, nr 2, s. 27 [GStAPK; APO: S-Film 5468]



ABOVE AND FOLLOWING TWO PAGES

DOC. 2 · 02. 02. 1655. The entry to the Biecz municipal records on the verdict of the local court ordering Jan Opatkowski, the plaintiff, to appear in court in person with regard to the case against Kazimierz Rozen, who allegedly sheltered Gypsies in the village of Stróże.

Castrensia Biecensia, t. 470, 1655 [APK (I)]

n Biecen in Castro Biecen Tertia Tertia post Testum Omnium San-
 ctorum proxime Ventur proxima celebran Vel his deficien in sub-
 sequen aliis ibidem celebran. Ad instantiam Instigatoris causam
 Judicii eisdem Nostri eusq Delatoris Seniores Joannis opatko-
 wski in Bieszna hunc personaliter hmo et peremptor compas.
 Qui te in hunc legibus et Constitutionibus Regni de non fouendis
 nec quopiam modo illis patrocinandis tanquam de Regno pro-
 scriptis Filistinis severe Sanctis citat. Quia tu flocci per-
 sis isdem legibus et Constitutionibus Regni et in partem reuocatis
 in eiusmodi Violatores sat vigore laudat et constitut. in-
 contrarium earum ausus es homines fide fragos de Regno
 proscriptos certum domicilium non habent immo vagos de loco
 in locum quotidie latitant et migant in villa Stwoze possont
 tue arendatorie subiect per medium annum dictos Filistini
 alias Gygani fouere et seruare illis auxilium et patrocinium
 contra vetitum legum prebere prout ipso facto fouebas au-
 xilium et patrocinium prebebas. Per quod in partem com-
 plicitatis scilicet similem bannition et de Regno proser-
 phon incurvisti et incidisti. Pro eadem super te Decreto
 Judicii presen sententiam et per Ministerialem publicam pre-
 sen vigore Constitution Regni ad Judicium nostrum citans
 sis ad premissa latius tibi in termino futuro deducen et
 declaran iudli vonsurus. Datum in Castro Biecen Tertia
 quarta post Testum Sancti Francisci Confessoris proxima
 Anno Domini Millesimo Deycentesimo Quinquagesimo quarto
 Et Judicium presens Castren Capitani Biecen scilicet pro tunc
 Magnus Joannes a Wielopole Wielopolski. Biecen Bochney
 (Capitani presidebat) partium preeminatarum Actum
 quidem per Mem Joannem Dudkowicz Citate vero per Nobil-
 lem Jacobum Roguski. Plures actis presen insurs coram
 se comparen et controuertent controuersiis inter se factis
 exauditis et eisdem debite intellectis Tenevi adesse pro-
 dictum Delatorem ad promouendam causam presentem
 sententiauit Decreti sui vigore. Quod

Quod Decretum suprascribitur Actor pro iure non suscepit
 ab eo et cum eodem Decreto supranominatum Magnificum
 loci praesentis Capneum ad iudicia Triblii Regni Lublinen
 mouit terminumq; prosequendae eiusdem Motionis succedere
 purgandae sententiae ipsius in eisdem iudiciis Triblii Regni
 Lublinen per Minlem Regni Episcopum Prouidum Andream Dole
 niowski de Bicz praefixit et assignauit 75

Quam huiusmodi Motionem iudicium hoc idem praesens ad
 eadem iudicia Triblii Regni Lublinen inter causas Paltis Pra
 couen Districtus Biezan admisit et termino illius ibidem delulit
 Habent itaq; et habitum sunt partes praenominatae eadem 613
 quib; in eisdem iudiciis Triblii Regni Lublinen in Sex Septi
 manis seu tunc tum et quando causer et actio praesens ex Re
 gesto competenti vocandorum Causarum Paltis Praconuen
 et Districtus Biezan ad iudicium inuenerit terminum peremptum
 iuxta Actoris citationem suprascribam controuersias suas Datum
 iudicii pntis Motion ab eo per Actorem interpositam et eide
 delatum terminum conseruationem et acti.

Si consideri il fatto che il detto Arsenale in pratica era a pieno affollamento e per l'una
componente e per l'altra. *Brux.*

[illegible]

3. Jędrzej Dąbrowski. Jan pisał do J. K. Wojtyły o sprawie ab-
negato z Głuchki do Wied. W tym samym Głuchki napisał z Janem wzmiankowaną
mi, list na tenże adres. P. Stanisław Cmeluk, z Śleszowa, który tam w mieście
z byłym bratem prawnym, który jeszcze oddawał kucykon za białą wazę, Jan
niech w tym tygodniu, chociaż pominięto im w tym względzie w Wiedniu, niech
aby Głuchki niebawem, że w tym im oni grzeszili, chociaż nieobecni, Jan
niech niech niech niech niech niech niech niech niech niech niech niech niech
kato, ponieważ to, z byłym bratem, ale go niech niech niech niech niech
Janu niech niech niech niech niech niech niech niech niech niech niech niech
pisał do J. K. Dąbrowski o sprawie z dalszymi w tym względzie.

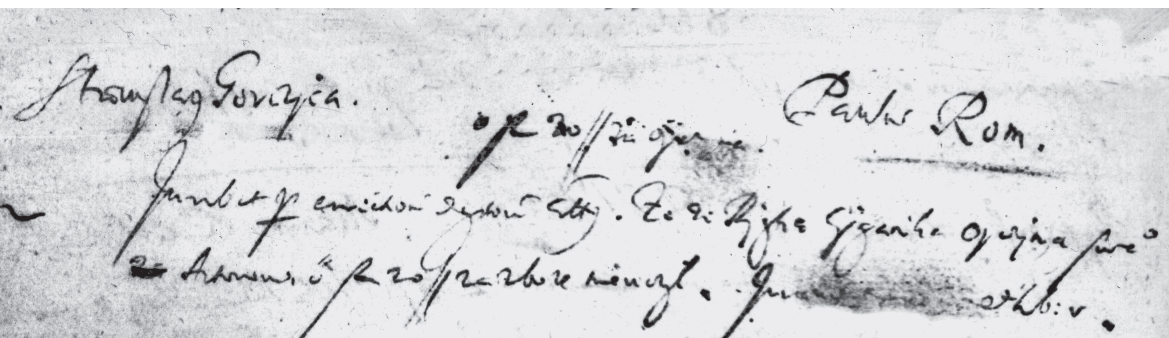
Complémentaire écrivain et diplomate.

Off. L'ouvrage est de la même nature, mais y renferme un grand nombre de
probabilités différentes. De la même nature.

570

DOC. 3 = 30.01.1640. The entry to the municipal records of Lwów of the witnesses' testimonies in the case of the stealing of a money bag from Franciszek Gawrus from Sokal by Jewka Cyganka (the *Gypsy woman*).

Protocolli Actorum Officii Aduocatialis Leopoliensis, 1640–1643 [IAL: F. 52, o. 2, nr 459]

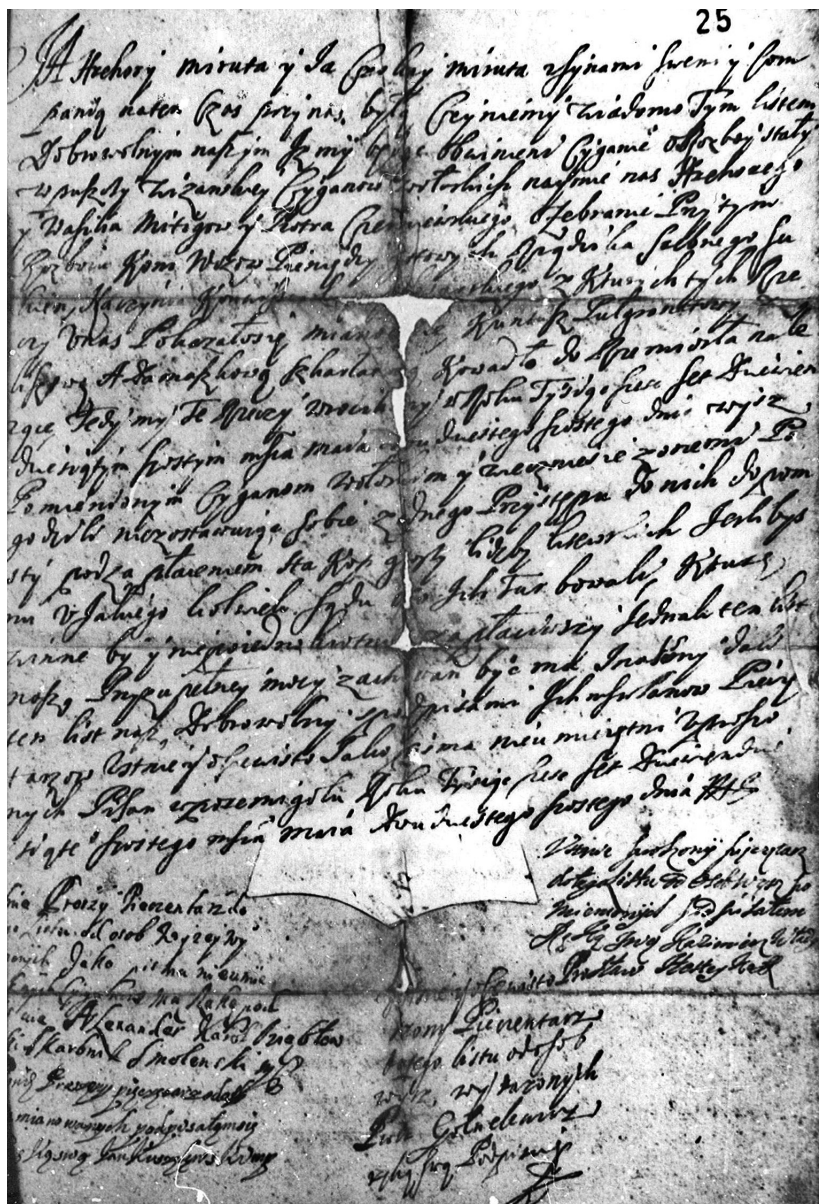


A snippet of a handwritten document in Latin script. The text is written in a cursive hand on aged, slightly stained paper. The visible text includes: "Strasburg Gorycia." on the first line, followed by "of 20/ii 1642." and "Pauk Rom." on the second line. The third line begins with "Juncta et emendata..." and continues with "et 9: Hic Gorycia opus..." The fourth line starts with "et Annus..." and ends with "...et h. v."

Strasburg Gorycia.
of 20/ii 1642. Pauk Rom.
Juncta et emendata... et 9: Hic Gorycia opus...
et Annus... et h. v.

DOC. 4 · 30. 04. 1642. The cases concerning Gypsies in the municipal records of Lwów.

Protocolli Actorum Officii Aduocatialis Leopoliensis, 1640–1643 [IAL: F. 52, o. 2, No 459]



DOC.5 · 26.05.1696, Przemigole. Hrehory Miruta and Czokaj Miruta with their sons, Hungarian Gypsies, testify that they returned to Hrehory and Wasyl Mitygas and Piotr Czerleniowski, Vlach Gypsies, certain goods taken during the robbery.

Etats—Ministerium, ІІО b, nr 2, s. 25 [GStAPK; APO: S—Film 5468]

Gypsy Kings and Elders

The 16th century brought with it considerable changes in the attitudes towards Gypsies almost all over Europe. Hostility towards them intensified, and various repressive actions aimed at expelling them, rather than encouraging their settlement, became more systematic. One of the few ideas going beyond this model was an attempt to appoint leaders of Gypsy communities to act as liaisons between them and the authorities. In Western Europe, this idea was never implemented in any considerable scale. The growing number of laws enacted against Gypsies, as well as ever-stricter punishments, were probably not without significance with regard to such a situation. On the other hand, in Poland the policy of appointing leaders of Gypsies and attempts to manage their communities with their help was implemented rather consistently from the times of John Casimir, and possibly even as early as Władysław IV's reign. In Hungary a similar solution was implemented even earlier than in Poland.

In 1557 Queen Isabella decided to give to Balatfi de Kiskend, in reward for his bravery, the office of voivode-overlord to "Pharaohs and Gypsies," and granted him the privilege of collecting due income, or in other words taxes, from Gypsies. Balatfi was not the only overlord of the Gypsies at the time: the administration of Queen Isabella appointed several voivodes and their deputies that collected taxes (Winstedt 1941, 49). These documents show that the Hungarian state implemented a deliberate model of internal policy towards Gypsies. The practice of appointing representatives of authorities who were leaders of Gypsies in Transylvania lasted until the 19th century, the difference with Hungary being that the appointed person was a Gypsy and not a Hungarian nobleman. Besides, they were appointed not by the ruler, but by local administration and had limited competences.

Usually Gypsies from a small territorial unit, such as a village, were subject to such a Gypsy *wójt*'s authority (*O Romima—Ciganima...*, 1979, 80). It appears, however, that the tradition of appointing Gypsy kings or leaders by rulers lasted the longest in Poland, for more than a century, and only in Poland was the list of kings so numerous, and the institution of Gypsy leaders was treated so seriously by owners of large properties and successive rulers.

The first known appointment document for a leader of Gypsies in the Commonwealth dates back to 1652. We do not know whether there was any correlation between the appointments in Transylvania a century earlier and King John Casimir's embracing the issue of Gypsy overlords. Relations between the Hungarian and Polish Crowns were rather close. It is, however, difficult to conclude on this basis that the earlier practice of appointing Gypsy leaders in Hungary influenced the Polish state's policy towards Gypsies in any way. We also cannot be certain that such steps analogous to the Hungarian ones had not been taken earlier in Poland.

In Warsaw in August 1652, the royal chancellery issued a letter-privilege to one "willing Matiasz Karolowicz [---] after the departure from this world of the willing Janczy," declaring his appointment to "the office of the elder of the Gypsies who [---] are staying and will be staying in the Crown and its adjacent countries, with all the prerogatives, incomes and benefits of this office, according to the tradition until now preserved."¹ Barely a month later, on September 10th, the text of the privilege was registered in the relevant acts in Sanok and entered into the municipal books (*Castr. Sanoc. Ind. Rel.*, t. 165, 1191–1193; DOC. 1). This entry starts with the traditional formulation in Latin: "The *oblata*² of His Royal Majesty's privilege for Karolowicz. Having come to the Sanok city starosta office and its registry of acts, the excellent Matiasz Karolowicz brought the following privilege of His Royal Majesty for entry into these acts and gave it to the

¹ Translated from Polish: "ochotnego Matiasza Karolowicza [---] po ześciu z tego świata ochotnego niegdy Janczego" na „urząd starszeństwa nad wszystkimi Cyganami którzy się [---] w Koronie i państwach jej przyległych znajdują i znajdować będą ze wszystkimi prerogatywami, dochodami i pożytkami do tego urzędu wedle zwyczaju zachowanego dotąd należącemu miał."

² *Oblata* were the entries of documents into relevant court acts.—Trans.

same Sanok city starosta office.”³ The accuracy of the dates of John Casimir’s reign and the name of his secretary make this document appear authentic. It is not clear whether Karolowicz, upon being granted the office of Gypsies’ overlord, also registered this document somewhere else. He travelled to Sanok from Warsaw probably via Sandomierz or Lublin. The Sandomierz records were destroyed by fire during the war, and so far in the Lublin ones it has not been possible to find the *oblata* of this privilege. He might have also registered this document in Lwów, but unfortunately the Lwów municipal acts of this period are incomplete, and the 1652 volume is missing.

Who was this Karolowicz, appointed as the overlord of all the Gypsies in the entire country, and who were his predecessors in this office? The document tells us that Karolowicz was appointed to this office after the death of Janczy. His name can be found in the successive appointment acts two more times, yet the name of the predecessor of Janczy cannot be found anywhere. Thus, the formulation “according to the tradition until now preserved,” in the fragment of the document referring to the income due to Karolowicz, does not necessarily mean a long tradition, but may refer only to the function previously performed by Janczy.

We do not know whether the office of the Gypsy elder had been established earlier. According to our knowledge to date, Janczy was the first person who held this office. The text of the privilege given to him is not known, and there is no information about the *oblata*. Ficowski (1985, 34) believes that he might have been the same Janczy as the royal *kobza*⁴ player at the court of King Władysław IV. The privilege to Matiasz Karolowicz was issued in the fourth year of John Casimir’s reign (counting from the election and not the coronation), which was also the fourth year after the death of King Władysław IV. This is not a long period of time and it is not clear precisely when Janczy was playing for Władysław IV, however this idea is

³ Translated from Polish: “Oblata przywileju jego królewskiej mości na rzecz Karolowicza. Do urzędu i akt niniejszych grodzkich starościńskich sanockich osobiście przyszedłszy, znakomity Matiasz Karolowicz przyniósł i do wpisania do akt temuż urzędowi niniejszemu grodzkiemu starościńskiemu sanockiemu podał przywilej niżej zapisany jego królewskiej mości.”

⁴ *Kobza* is a musical instrument of the lute family.—Trans.

probable. We are also not certain whether Janczy was appointed as the elder of Gypsies during the times of John Casimir, or whether it was Władysław IV who made him their overlord. Another open question is whether this was a confirmation of a choice made by Gypsies themselves, or was rather an office granted in recognition of the appointee's achievements, for example his talent in playing the *kobza*. Finally, we do not know whether Janczy had any predecessors, or whether the tradition of the Gypsy king in Poland starts with him.

We also cannot be certain whether or not Karolowicz was related to Janczy through family ties. In the 1652 text, the names of both Janczy and Karolowicz are preceded by the word “willing” (*ochotny*); the Latin formula of the text for the privilege entered into the Sanok acts uses the word “*egregius*” (excellent). From then on, the offices of the Gypsy overlords were granted to representatives of the nobility. In this case, however, it is clear that neither Janczy, nor Karolowicz were noblemen, though we can also surmise that they were not regular peasants, otherwise such terms as “hard-working” (*pracowity*) or good-hearted would have been used. Besides, it is difficult to imagine that a simple peasant would be nominated as the overlord of the Gypsies. The term “willing” fits someone who has got some refinement and some education, such as a minor non-noble official. It would also probably be fitting for a refined Gypsy court musician. Thus, not only Janczy, but also Karolowicz, the Gypsy overlords themselves were Gypsies. It is not surprising then that neither the surname of Janczy nor that of Karolowicz appears in any armorial.

Chance has played a significant role in scientific discoveries on many occasions, and it is obvious that the chances of discovery are greater when systematic research is conducted over a long period of time. This was also the case of this work. When this book was almost completed, a document was found thanks to which we could get to know Janczy a bit better. In 1646, a criminal case was entered into the Kraków acts under the subtitle “Jarmolewicz with regard to a Gypsy to gain the punishment of infamy and throat.”⁵ The case was lodged by the plaintiff nobleman Jerzy Jarmolewicz, who sued “Jan Janczy,

⁵ Translated from Polish: “Jarmolewicz Cingarum in lucro paenae infamiae et colli — Jarmolewicz Cygana w zysk kary infamii i gardła.”

Cingar or Gypsy, a *kobza*-player, in reference to the Crown constitutions with regard to the presence of vagrants in the Crown and different places of the Crown”⁶ (*Castr. Crac.*, t. 910, 1131–1134; DOC. 2). The text of the statement of claim follows. The text refers to the ban on staying in Poland, violated by Janczy, and goes on to describe the incident being the reason for his summons to court. The court charged him, the document states:

at a certain time on Friday [---] you invited the plaintiff under the pretenses of friendship first to your lodgings and then, making many promises, dragging this same plaintiff, already fairly drunk with wine and by you treated in a friendly manner, to various places [---] with many accomplices, first, you insulted his good name, reputation and honor in front of many people in contemptible words [---] and finally with swords drawn, knocking him down, you inflicted many deadly wounds to different parts of his body and half-alive you left him lying and probably you would have killed your plaintiff out of your bad intentions if it was not for the uproar and Providence that averted your intention, but you were not satisfied by that [---] at night you broke into his house and with a musket and gun-powder and bullets and with your same accomplices in your typical violent way you surrounded the chamber where the plaintiff was already injured by you and shot several times right through the door, trying to bring to an end your intention of killing that same plaintiff, and in this way [---] you violated public security, profaned the presence of His Royal Majesty, ignored the Crown laws and the authority of our courts.

The statement of claim was prepared on July 30, and it either was lodged by someone authorized by Jarmolewicz, or else he himself managed to get out of bed, despite his “deadly wounds.” The fact that the inflicted wounds did not result in Jarmolewicz’s death follows from the very document, which says nothing about murder

⁶ Translated from Polish: “Jana Janczego, Cingara albo Cygana, kobzistę, jako konstytucjom koronnym co do przebywania w Koronie w różnych miejscach tejże Korony wółczącym się”.

and mentions only injury. A day later the Kraków starosta court pronounced the verdict: “infamy and the throat is pronounced and it is hereby pronounced that the mentioned one is villainous and banished from the Polish Kingdom and the united countries and to be shortened by head, it is hereby so declared”⁷ (ibid., 1134).

Too many elements fall together for this to be a different Janczy. According to this document, Janczy was a Gypsy and a *kobza*-player, although not yet a royal one; if that had been the case, the entry book would have informed us of that fact. He was also a person associated with wanderers, thus a Gypsy not just in name, as the sentence referring to the ban on Gypsies staying in the Crown indicates that. It also indirectly tells us that there was no Gypsy overlord in Poland as of yet, or at least Janczy did not hold this office. If he had done so, again this information would have been mentioned. Thus, in mid-1646 he was neither a royal *kobza*-player nor yet an overlord of the Gypsies. At the same time he was not a vagrant, who lived with his family not far from the market square. Feasting or drinking with the plaintiff indicates that also with his social contacts and ties, he moved in more noble circles, rather than in the margins of society. We do not know where and for whom he played, but his skills must have been recognized.

We do not know the rest of this story. Yet, let us try to consider the possible relations between both characters: the Janczy from the document by John Casimir issued on behalf of Karolowicz, and the Jan Janczy known for a brawl on Sławkowska Street in Kraków. Jarmolewicz likely did not die by Janczy’s hand and the case was appealed: as despite the court’s conviction, the verdict appears not to have been enforced. Janczy could also have appealed to a higher court or the king’s mercy and have had his punishment changed or suspended. King Władysław IV lived until 1648. These important events in the history of Gypsies must have taken place within the short period of time between the brawl with Jarmolewicz and the ensuing court verdict, and the death of King Władysław IV, in May 1648. Thanks to Janczy’s attempts to have the sentence commuted, or

⁷ Translated from Polish: “infamii i gardła, orzekł i niniejszym orzeka, że tenże jest bezecnym i z Królestwa Polskiego i państw do niego przyłączonych wywołanym i o głowę skróconym, ogłosił i niniejszym ogłasza.”

the possible intervention of one of Kraków's notables, or just a fortunate course of events, he had a chance to present his music to the king. And he must have been an exceptional player or even a virtuoso, since he gained recognition from the king. At the same time, the king and his court officials must have been considering forms of managing and controlling Gypsies who lived in the Commonwealth, and usually evaded tax collectors or other representatives of the authorities. Thus, probably in this short period between 1647 and 1648, Władysław IV made Janczy an overlord of the Gypsies in the Crown, and possibly in the whole Commonwealth, establishing an office that existed for almost a century and a half.

A Gypsy with experience at the royal court would have been a good candidate for solving the problem of uncontrollable, volatile Gypsy groups. Whether we take the banishment acts by Sigismund II Augustus, or later attempts to levy taxes on Gypsies, or the appointment of Jan Kazimierz Matiasz Karolowicz, these are all attempts at establishing relations between the settled population of the country and the Gypsies, attempts to solve the problem of a mobile Gypsy population by embedding it into the social structure, into a system of interdependences, duties, and control. Various solutions were considered, and the appointment of a Gypsy court was probably an attempt to find a solution that was advantageous for the authorities as well as acceptable, as it was believed, for the Gypsies themselves. The king and royal officials probably believed that Janczy, being a Gypsy, would be the best candidate for the function of an administrator and, at the same time, a liaison between them and the royal chancellery.

We do not know when Janczy died. The privilege issued by King John Casimir for Karolowicz is dated August 1652, but Janczy was already dead by then, which is clearly stated in the document. We also do not know the full scope of authority and entitlements of Janczy.

A significant part of Karolowicz's office was collecting levied taxes, and apart from that he was also responsible for investigating offences and searching for the perpetrators. However, the matter of those taxes is far from clear: the sejm levied a tax of 15 groszes per Gypsy in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1589 and once again in 1590, but otherwise no tax from the Gypsies in the Crown was specifically mentioned. Thus, it is unclear to whom and in what amount the taxes

that were supposed to be collected by the overlord from the Gypsies in the Commonwealth were. Karolowicz was thus a sort of viceroy, a representative of the authorities or administration, and not somebody who was supposed to protect Gypsies. However, Karolowicz never actually performed his duties of office, and perhaps he died soon after the appointment. Evidence that he did not administer the Gypsies follows from the next two records regarding Gypsy overlords.

Ten years after granting the privilege to Karolowicz, John Casimir appointed “the position of elder among the Gypsies both in the Crown and in Lithuania, having been vacant after the death of Jancy, born Sebastian Gałęzowski.”⁸ The information about granting this privilege was entered into the *Sigillata* on October 31 (t. 5, 130v). This time a nobleman was appointed to the office of Gypsy overlord. The text of the privilege is not known, thus we cannot answer the question of why the authorities resigned from the idea of appointing Gypsies to this office, or for what services or character traits Gałęzowski was honored with by the authorities of this office. The entry in the *Sigillata* refer to Jancy as “noble,” though there is no information that he was actually raised to nobility, otherwise there would have been information about this also in the privilege granted to Karolowicz. The conditions for conferring titles of nobility had already been precisely defined and the sejm had to accept such a nomination. We can say with considerable certainty that Jancy had not been knighted. However, it is possible that it did not seem right that a nobleman would be a successor to an office previously held by someone inferior, or non-noble, and that is why in the privilege granted to Gałęzowski, Jancy is referred to as “noble” even though he was not a nobleman. We do not know what sort of person Gałęzowski was. The *Sigillata* does not mention for what services John Casimir wanted to reward Gałęzowski with by this appointment, to be the overlord of all Gypsies in almost the entire Commonwealth. The privilege was issued in Lwów but we do not know whether Gałęzowski registered it in the municipal books, something that would be likely

⁸ Translated from Polish: “starszeństwo nad Cyganami tak w Koronie jako i w Litwie, będącemi po śmierci szlachetnego Janczego wakujące, urodzonemu Sebastianowi Gałęzowskiemu.”

and logical. The Lwów municipal acts from the first half of this century, that is until 1663, are not complete, and not all of the books have been preserved, and the entry of this privilege has so far not been found.

Yet, it appears that Gałęzowski, like Karolowicz, did not fulfill the obligations imposed on him because just five years later, on April 11, 1668, in Warsaw, King John Casimir granted the privilege “of the position of an elder among the Gypsies, living both in the Crown and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, having been vacant after Janczy’s death, to the noble Jan Nawrotyński, companion of the crown field writer,⁹ born under the banner.”¹⁰ The fact of the granting of this privilege was recorded in the *Sigillata* (t. 10, b. 85) but the text of the privilege itself is not known. The surname of Karolowicz was not mentioned this time as well, which may be indirect evidence that in fact he never performed this function. Starting with Gałęzowski, all subsequent persons nominated for Gypsies’ overlords were of nobility; furthermore, Nawrotyński was a military man. The reason for this may be that these were turbulent times with the Swedish Deluge and wars in the east and south of the country. Thus, John Casimir might have thought that by nominating a military man he increased the chances that the duties of the appointed office would actually be exercised.

Both entries in the *Sigillata* mention Janczy, and this may indicate that he had actually made an effort in administering the Gypsies in the Commonwealth. We do not know anything about Nawrotyński, as no armorial mentions his name. The appointment of Nawrotyński is probably the last privilege for the office of the Gypsy overlord, issued by John Casimir. In September of the same year the king abdicated and left Poland for France.

About a dozen years later, in 1682, King John III Sobieski granted the privilege of Gypsy elder to Stanisław Węglowski, a nobleman,

⁹ The crown field writer was Jakub Potocki at the time.

¹⁰ Translated from Polish: “na starszeństwo nad Cyganami, tak w Koronie jako i w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim mieszkającymi, szlachetnemu Janowi Nawrotyńskiemu, towarzyszowi pod chorągwią urodzonego pisarza polnego koronnego, a to po śmierci nigdy Janczego wakujące.”

“for unrelenting military merits.”¹¹ The appointment document for a new overlord of those defined in the act as “the wandering people of the Gypsy nation”¹² was issued on July 10, 1682, in Jaworów (today in Ukraine, about half way between Lwów and Przemyśl, where a lesser residence of John III Sobieski was located). An entry with regard to this document could not be found in the *Sigillata*; however, not all documents were registered there, e.g., those prepared during the king’s travels. The document also was not entered into the Lwów acts, neither on the same day nor within the following days. The Lwów municipal books from 1682 do not contain the *oblata* for Węglowski’s privilege. Ten days later, however, on July 20th of the same year, Węglowski registered this privilege in Lublin. The municipal books have been preserved and are kept in the Lublin archive, yet this particular volume is missing. It was lost during WWII or earlier, as the archive had been moved during the partitioning of Poland to Central Russia. Fortunately, Węglowski treated his office seriously and made an effort to perform it well, or perhaps he simply wanted to take precautions against those trying to illegitimately derive benefits from Gypsies. The privilege received by him in Jaworów was next registered in the Kraków books, thanks to which we know the text of the privilege itself. The registration took place on August 25, 1689, seven years after it had been issued by the royal chancellery and registered in Lublin, which may indicate that Węglowski had indeed made an attempt to serve as overlord of the Gypsies. It is also likely that usurpers to the office had already appeared and that is why he registered the document in Kraków for the second time.

The text starts with a Latin formula, which contains the information about the document and the person submitting it for registration in the acts (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 116, 1015–1018; DOC. 3). It is followed by the actual text of the privilege. Węglowski received supreme authority over the Gypsies and the right to “judge all Gypsies living in the Crown as well as in the Duchy of Lithuania, and to punish their wrongdoings according to his judgment. Yet he will defend with his supreme right and provide support to anyone appealing to his

¹¹ Translated from Polish: “ustawiczne wojenne usługi.”

¹² Translated from Polish: “błagający się ludzie cygańskiego narodu.”

authority for help.”¹³ The document also contains the king’s order that representatives of municipal and other authorities “recognize noble-born Węłowski in this office of supreme authority over the Gypsies according to this privilege, whereas the Gypsies should pay him the respect and duties that they owe to him”¹⁴ (*ibid.*). What follows from this is that being an overlord of the Gypsies gave him the opportunity to collect taxes from them. We cannot be sure what sort of tax is meant here, but most probably this is a per capita tax, though it is also possible that Gypsies paid taxes depending on their occupation. For the first time since the appointment of a Gypsy overlord, we also learn that it was his duty to take care of Gypsies and protect them from any harm. Prior to this, only the protection of the non-Gypsy population from Gypsies had been mentioned. The fragment cited here also suggests that King John III treated the institution of the overlord as an important element of internal policy.

Węłowski received the privilege after “the resignation of noble Molski,” as we learn from the entry in the Kraków books. In this way we also know the name of Węłowski’s predecessor. It is not known when and by whom Molski was appointed or who he was. It is possible that John III, the king until 1674, made this appointment, but it also could have been Michael I (Michał Korybut), who reigned after John Casimir but before John III Sobieski. Just as in case of previous Gypsy overlords, both Molski and Węłowski were, as it appears, people of little significance.

After John III Sobieski’s death, August II was elected the king; he held this office until 1733 (there was a brief interim, when Stanisław Leszczyński assumed the throne). Although we know for certain that August II issued six privileges for Gypsy overlords, it is likely that there were more of them, as the documents contain the names of persons who had probably also received appointments from the king.

¹³ Translated from Polish: “Cyganów wszystkich tak w Koronie jako i w Księstwie Litewskim mieszkających sądzić, występnych karać i winami podług wyroku sądu swego uskramiać. Lecz jednak do zwierzchności jego każdego uciekającego się powinien będzie najwyższym swoim prawem bronić i ratować.”

¹⁴ Translated from Polish: “urodzonego Węłowskiego na urządzie tym, zwierzchności nad Cyganami zostającego, za tym przywilejem naszym na każdym miejscu uznawali, Cygani zaś przełożenstwa i powinności z dawna należyte jemu oddawali.”

The next known overlord was Bokiej. We learn about him in a document from the Lithuanian Metrica Archives (Metryka Litewska) issued on December 26, 1697, in Kraków, just after August II had started his reign. This time the act does not refer to the appointed person as simply an elder or overlord. The privilege begins with the words of granting “[t]he Gypsy kingdom to the noble-born Iwaszkiewicz *post fata*¹⁵ of the noble-born Bokiej.”¹⁶ Further on in the document it is said that Iwaszkiewicz “*sub tempus electionis*,”¹⁷ having presented extensive proof of his kindly services to us and to the entire Commonwealth, in consideration of which we, with our attention to noble-born Łukasz Michał Iwaszkiewicz and his ruined fortune, have decided to bestow *in personam eius*¹⁸ the Gypsy kingdom in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, falling to our disposition *post decessum*¹⁹ of the noble-born Bokiej”²⁰ (*Lit. Metr.*, e. h. 149, part 4, 468–469).

Łukasz Michał Iwaszkiewicz had supported August during the election, and as it follows from the privilege, the Gypsy kingdom was a reward for his loyal services. The Iwaszkiewiczzes were a well-known family in Lithuania, and they are mentioned among the persons who signed the election act of August II (Boniecki, t. VIII, 1905, 76–77). The family of Bokiej was also known in Lithuania. According to Boniecki, Tobiasz Bokiej signed the election of John III; Bogusław, Zygmunt, and Zygmunt Franciszek signed the act of election of August II as the king (Boniecki, t. I, 1899, 370–371). The privilege does not mention the christian name of Bokiej, so we do not know which one of them is meant here. It is also questionable which king

¹⁵ *Post fata* means “after the death of.”

¹⁶ Translated from Polish: “Królestwo cygańskie urodzonemu Iwaszkiewiczowi post fata urodzonego Bokieja.”

¹⁷ *Sub tempus electionis* means “during the election.”

¹⁸ *In personam eius* means “on his person.”

¹⁹ *Post decessum* means “after his departure (death).”

²⁰ Translated from Polish: “*sub tempus electionis* ku nam i całej Rzeczypospolitej życziwych usług swoich znaczne okazał dokumenta, zaczym mając wzgląd i baczenie nasze na urodzonego Łukasza Michała Iwaszkiewicza i jego nadrujnowaną fortunę, umyśliliśmy in personam eius dać i konferować królestwo cygańskie w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim, post decessum urodzonego Bokieja do dyspozycji naszej przypaść.”

appointed Bokiej as the Gypsy overlord. The election of August II took place on June 27, 1697, and the privilege for Iwaszkiewicz is dated December 26th of that year. The short period of time between the election and the privilege suggests that the appointment for Bokiej had been prepared by the chancellery of John III, which seems even more likely taking in account the Bokiejs' support for the election of Sobieski, which probably had to be rewarded in some way.

The text of the privilege does not reveal other new details. As in the case of John Casimir's document for Karolowicz, Iwaszkiewicz was to collect what was due from the Gypsies and punish culprits. This privilege makes him the *de facto* judge of the Gypsies. While we do not know whether Iwaszkiewicz was required to pass on some percentage of the collected money to the royal treasury, it is clear that the privilege was meant to support Iwaszkiewicz, the Gypsy king, and his "ruined" fortune.

The next known appointment is dated July 26, 1703. This is a privilege issued in Lublin to Jan Dewałtowski for the "vacant seniority and authority [over] *vagabundorum Cingarorum*."²¹ The text is known thanks to an entry in the Rosienie (a town in Żmudź) land court books (*Rosień. ziem. sąd*, t. 170, 550–551v). It gave the appointed person the right to income from the held office, and requested leaders and local authorities not to prevent him from collecting what was his due from the Gypsies. The scope of his jurisdiction covered the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Żmudź. Dewałtowski probably belonged to the lesser nobility since his name is not mentioned in any armorial. We also do not know for what services August II rewarded Dewałtowski with this privilege.

Two years later, on September 10, 1705, August II appointed a new overlord of the Gypsies, granting this office to the nobleman Bonawentura Jan Wiera. The privilege was issued in Warsaw but it is not mentioned in the *Sigillata*. It was, however, entered into the Sanok books on November 26th of the same year. The document says that Wiera had the right to judge and punish, appoint deputies, judges and, overlords of a lower rank, to ensure that Gypsies abided by the law. Thus the institution of an elder was becoming more and

²¹ *Vagabundorum Cingarorum* means "wandering Gypsies."

more serious, with a much broader scope of competencies. The document also mentions his due levies and incomes (*Castr. Sanoc. Ind. Rel.*, t. 209, 2096–2098).

Evidently there were cases of the illegitimate collection of dues and levies from Gypsies, since King August II ordered in his privilege that offices and city halls should “help protect against persons who seek to appropriate the said office in the above mentioned territories”²² (*ibid.*). Since the surname of Wiera does not appear in armorials, we do not know more about who he was. However, the names of the officials issuing the 1703 and 1705 documents, who were clerks of the land court and the Crown deputy-chancellor, as well as the offices and dates, which we can confirm on the basis of existing literature, are correct, indicating that the documents are authentic.

The next privilege issued by August II in 1720 stated: “Since in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania *cum annexis provinciis*²³ the Gypsies have become accustomed to living indulgently without any ruler, yet suffer wrongs from various [people] [---] in reward for the years of military service to the Commonwealth’s benefit and ours, [which resulted in] a strain on his fortune and his loss of health, we decide to declare the noble-born Kazimierz Wyszomirski [---] a general ruler of all Gypsies and proclaim this to all.”²⁴ The text of the document is known from the entry into the *Lithuanian Metrica* (*Lit. Metr.*, e. h. 160, part 5, 578–579). It is strange that it is not mentioned in the *Sigillata*, although the privilege was issued in Warsaw on November 28th.

Wyszomirski was appointed the “general ruler,” and the office was a reward for services to the king and a way of enrichment for his strained fortune. However, the duty to judge and rule indicates that the office was still seen as a way of controlling the Gypsy

²² Translated from Polish: “pomoc przeciwko komukolwiek rzeczony urząd w powyższych ziemiach przywłaszczyć sobie chcącemu.”

²³ *Cum annexis provinciis* means “with its adjacent provinces.”

²⁴ Translated from Polish: “Że Cyganie w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim *cum annexis provinciis* zwykli bez rządcy nad sobą swawolnie żyć, niemniej i onym od różnych różne krzywdy dzieją się [---] w rekompensę strawionych lat na usługę wojennej Rzeczypospolitej i naszej, z nadwyrężeniem fortuny i stratą zdrowia urodzonego Kazimierza Wyszomirskiego [---] za generalnego rządcę wszystkimi Cyganami deklarować i wszystkim ogłosić umyśliliśmy.”

population, especially those with a wandering habit of life. What makes Wyszomirski's privilege different from the appointments of his predecessors by August II, is the duty to protect Gypsies against any injustices, in addition to judging them for any offences towards non-Gypsies. Within the previous privileges of Gypsy overlords, only the act by John III Sobieski for Węglowski contained a similar provision.

The next overlord was appointed by August II on March 11, 1729, the *Sigillata* contain an entry that on that day "the office of the Gypsy king" was given to Jakub Trzciński, a nobleman (t. 22, b. 22v). Several months later, on October 20th, the privilege was registered in Kraków and entered into the municipal books, thanks to which we know the text of this document. This document is the most extensive one and provides the most detailed information about the office out of all the existing documents. It contains the following: "[We] August the Second [---] announce in this letter as our privilege [---] in order that the Gypsy people [---] could be kept under good government and in due fear as well as offering them protection against wrongdoings and support in their affairs, [that we grant] the currently vacant office of the Gypsy king *post fata* the noble-born Żulicki [---] to noble-born Jakub Trzciński" (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 153, 3124–3127; DOC. 4). It is also mentioned that previously the privilege had been granted to Stanisław Godziemba Niżyński, who, however, left the country and did not fulfill his duties, and besides was not behaving properly, and thus had no right to hinder Trzciński from performing this function. The privilege gives the right to Trzciński to appoint a vice-king, who would help him in governing Gypsies. The document appointing Trzciński to the office of the overlord of the Gypsies in the Commonwealth indicates that there were many people eager to increase their fortunes at the cost of the Gypsies, by collecting levies from them. The text indicates beyond a shadow of doubt that this was not an incidental case. We read that "there are such persons who usurp [---] these prerogatives which should be held by Gypsy kings and in different ways [---] force the Gypsies to [pay them] levies and put similar burdens and troubles on them," and Trzciński received the right to prosecute such usurpers (*ibid.*). This sentence seems to indicate that the office of the Gypsy overlord could indeed be a profitable one.

Thus, we learn the names of three successive Gypsy rulers: Żulicki, Stanisław Godziemba Niżyński, and Jakub Trzcński. The appointment acts for the first two have not been preserved, and it is only mentioned in the Trzcński's document that Niżyński was holding this office for about a dozen years and that Żulicki had most likely been appointed before Niżyński. We do not know anything more about any of the three, although their names have been mentioned in the armorials.

Two years later in Warsaw on March 3, 1731, August II issued another privilege for "the office of the Gypsy king," after Trzcński's resignation. The person appointed by the king is Franciszek Bogusławski, and the privilege was recorded in the *Sigillata* (t. 22, b. 71). We know the text of the privilege from two *oblatas*. On June 4th Bogusławski presented the document in Kraków, where it was entered in the municipal acts (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 155, 1481–1485). Soon after, on July 20th of the same year, Bogusławski registered the appointment document in Lwów. The privilege was entered into the municipal books with a note about the earlier *oblata* in Kraków (*Castr. Leopold. Ind. Rel.*, t. 526, 2279–2282). The text of the privilege itself is almost identical to the one issued to Trzcński; one could assume that the second one was copied from the first. Thus, it is probable that either Trzcński returned the granted privilege upon his resignation, or that a copy or draft of Trzcński's document was left at the royal chancellery. We do not know much about Bogusławski. He is mentioned in an armorial by Boniecki, and for the first time we also find in this source information of "an appointed Gypsy king in 1731" (t. I, 1899, 351).

To sum up, we know of six documents appointing Gypsy overlords signed by August II (dated 1697, 1703, 1705, 1720, 1729, and 1731); at least two more must have been issued, yet neither their texts nor the time of their issue is known to us. Thus, August II is the true creator of the idea of a Gypsy king in Poland. He also consistently implemented a new social policy with regard to Gypsies, which was intended not merely to control and judge them for their offences, but also to protect them against harm from others.

Yet, another appointment was entered into the *Sigillata* thirty years later (t. 27, 540, point 16). The entry made on September 10, 1761, in Warsaw mentions "the office of the Gypsy king in the Małopolska (Lesser Poland) voivodeships granted to Józef Gozdawa

Boczkowski.”²⁵ Unfortunately, the text of the document is not known. The Boczkowskis were a well-known family in Małopolska (Lesser Poland) and it is possible that the appointment of Józef as a regional king followed from the fact that he was from Małopolska and agreed to perform this function only there. Boniecki noted in his armorial: “Józef Gozdawa Boczkowski became the king of the Gypsies in the Małopolska voivodeships in 1761”²⁶ (Boniecki, t. I, 1899, 317). We also do not know for what services or merits Boczkowski was rewarded with this privilege, nor do we know whether he in fact fulfilled his duties. The privilege for Boczkowski is the only known act of appointment of a Gypsy overlord by King August III, and it was issued towards the end of his long reign.

The privilege for Bogusławski is dated 1731. This is the last known appointment act issued by King August II who died two years later, and so it is likely that after Bogusławski he did not appoint any other Gypsy overlords. The document for Boczkowski was issued thirty years later by the next king, August III, in the last years of his life. We do not know for how long Bogusławski held the office of the Gypsy king. We also do not know whether any other person was appointed to this office or whether there was a period of *interregnum* during this 30-year period.

In the Kraków books we can read the testimonies of two brothers, Wawrzyniec and Michał Głowacki, recorded in 1738. From this lengthy and very interesting document we learn that both of them travelled with a group of Gypsies, profiting from thefts. They were arrested after a brawl at an inn and a fight with local peasants, and were put in a Kraków prison. Their testimonies present a very detailed account of the offences that they committed (*Castr. Crac.*, t. 502, 789–797). Both testimonies contain information that the father of Wawrzyniec and Michał, Marcin Głowacki, traded in horses (*ibid.*, 795). From the testimony of the younger brother, Wawrzyniec, we also learn that his mother “lived off fortune-telling”²⁷ (*ibid.*, 789). Most intriguing to us,

²⁵ Translated from Polish: “urząd królestwa cygańskiego w województwach małopolskich urodzonemu Józefowi Gozdawie Boczkowskiemu nadany.”

²⁶ Translated from Polish: “Józef Gozdawa Boczkowski został królem Cyganów w województwach małopolskich 1761 roku.”

²⁷ Translated from Polish: “z wróżenia żyła.”

however, is the last fragment of Wawrzyniec's testimony. He was asked: "How did you come to join the Gypsies, not being born a Gypsy,"²⁸ and he responded: "Because I had a long acquaintance with them, since all the Gypsies in the Kraków voivodeship were under my Father's command and he collected levies from them"²⁹ (ibid., 797). It is likely that this minor nobleman was granted the privilege of authority over Gypsies in the Kraków region for some services. Both brothers, Michał and Wawrzyniec, were brought up either among Gypsies or having regular contact with them, and so it is natural that later they were travelling with them, trying to get employment in service, and getting involved in petty thefts. Yet, it is also possible that we have a different case here. We know that the privileges for some overlords gave them the right to appoint deputies who could collect taxes and had partial authority over Gypsies. It is likely that Głowacki was an official subordinate to Bogusławski, and he appointed the king of Gypsies in 1731. (I would like to remind the reader that the testimonies of the Głowacki brothers are from 1738.) This second possibility seems more likely. Their way of life, the economic situation of Głowacki, and the fact that his wife was earning money as a fortune-teller, are not characteristic of someone who might have even momentary access to the king and would have had the chance to receive the appointment to be the supreme authority over Gypsies. He more likely fits the image of a possible aide to the Gypsy king.

In 1767, the surname of Iwaszkiewicz as Gypsy king was mentioned again, and this happens exactly 70 years after the appointment of Łukasz Michał Iwaszkiewicz by August II. The document containing this information is entitled "The Manifesto or Gypsy Confederation" (*Manifest czyli Konfederacya Cyganska*) and is in the volume *Miscellanea to the Reign of the Saxons and Stanisław August Poniatowski* (*Miscellanea do panowania Sasów i Stanisława Augusta Poniatowskiego*). The *Manifesto* is one of the texts from a collection of polemics on the issue of different religions, the attitudes towards Jews, protestants, etc. "The

²⁸ Translated from Polish: "Jakiem sposobem dostałeś się do Cyganów nie będąc urodzonym Cyganem."

²⁹ Translated from Polish: "Z tej racji iż miałem dawną znajomość z niemi, ponieważ Ociec mój miał komendę nad wszystkimi w województwie całym krakowskim zostającymi i dań od nich odbierał."

Manifesto or Gypsy Confederation” (hereafter cited in text as “Manifesto”) starts with the information that the “well- and noble-born Lord Iwaszkiewicz, a citizen of the Witebsk *powiat*, the privileged Gypsy king and Antoni from Bóbr, Jozef of Mohylów, Marshalls of the Gypsy Confederation, in their own name and that of the confederated Gypsy States both in the Crown and in the G. D. of Lith.”³⁰ (*Miscellanea...*, 122). The author of the “Manifesto” must have been well-informed about Gypsy affairs and the actions undertaken with regard to them, and his knowledge was not limited to Gypsies in the Commonwealth. He possessed considerable knowledge with regard to the whole of Europe, one could say he was an erudite, as he knew the perceptions common at the time in his home country, as well as legal acts adopted in France and Spain ordering Gypsies to leave the country. If the Iwaszkiewicz mentioned in the “Manifesto” indeed was appointed as the authority over Gypsies, it was the first, and possibly the only, instance of inheriting the office of the Gypsy king in Poland.

The next ruler of the Gypsies was Jakub Znamierowski, a landlord and citizen of the Łódź *powiat*. Although the privilege issued on August 17, 1780, by Stanisław August Poniatowski did not make him a king, it did refer to his supreme authority over Lithuanian Gypsies. We know more about this ruler thanks to existing literature, where in particular Narbutt paid a considerable amount of attention to him. We know that Znamierowski kept close contacts with Gypsies, traded horses with them and later also travelled with them, mainly in the territories of Lithuania, and this at least makes it clear why his office was limited to Lithuania and not the whole country. His familiarity and common businesses with Gypsies may indicate that King Stanisław August put the office into appropriate hands. Znamierowski ruled for a relatively long time, up to his death in 1795. This is also the last year of the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski, the last king, and the year of the downfall of the Commonwealth and its partitioning amongst the Habsburg Empire, Prussia, and Russia.

As befits an enlightened king, taking care of his subjects, aware of the intellectual currents among learned humanists of Europe in respect to social issues, Stanisław August mentioned several

³⁰ G.D. Lith. refers to the Great Duchy of Lithuania.

significant issues in the privilege for Znamierowski. Narbutt writes: "He will settle disputes between them, administer justice in the case of wrongdoings by them *ritu solito*,³¹ punish culprits, protect them from harm from others, collect a yearly per capita tax from every Gypsy in the amount of 15 groszes for himself, persuade them to work and live locally for the common good" (Narbutt 1830, 129–133).

Thus, Znamierowski was supposed to be a judge in disputes between Gypsies. The formulation regarding protection "from harm from others" means that he also was assigned to protect Gypsies from any wrongdoings committed by non-Gypsies. The tax that they were obliged to pay is clearly mentioned. Also, the idea of persuading Gypsies to settle permanently and take up work appeared in an official document for the first time. It later was taken up by the Great Sejm and was discussed in the Universal of the Commission of Both Nations (*Uniwersał Komisji Obojga Narodów*),³² from December 1791. The document was devoted to the Gypsies' affairs, and made references to the articles of the Constitution of the 3rd of May.

With the death of Znamierowski, the period during which a policy aimed at subordinating Gypsies to the royal authority and the rules that governed the rest of the society by establishing the office of an overlord came to an end. This period lasted for 147 years, from the appointment of Janczy in circa 1647, until the death of Znamierowski in 1795; 133 years had elapsed from the appointment of the first non-Gypsy, a nobleman, to this office.

Since the text of the last document is known only from Narbutt's publication, it seems that nobody else had seen it. The family records of the Zenowicz family that are kept in the Vilnius archive, from where Narbutt supposedly copied the document, have not yet been properly catalogued. It is possible that the Znamierowski privilege is still there.

Many historians have legitimate doubts with regard to Narbutt's credibility, and the previously discussed act from 1501, the privilege for Znamierowski, raises concerns. Appointments for Gypsy overlords were always signed by the king, and this was the case for all of

³¹ *Ritu solito* means "in the usual manner."

³² *Both Nations* stands for Poles and Lithuanians, as in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

the appointments discussed here, whereas the privilege for Znamierowski is signed only by a deputy-chancellor. Moreover, according to Narbutt, the document is stamped with the seal of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which the royal deputy-chancellor did not have the right to use. In addition, the amount of the per capita tax, fifteen *groszes*, is doubtful. The sejms in 1589 and 1590 did indeed establish the per capita tax from Gypsies in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the amount of fifteen *groszes*. However, since the currency did not remain stable for those 190 years, the amount of tax should have been higher. Hence, it is likely that this document is also a forgery.

As we have learnt from the discussed documents, the appointed offices did not cover the entire territory of the Commonwealth in all cases; some office holders were just regional overlords or kings: e.g., Iwaszkiewicz, Dewałtowski, Wiera, Wyszomirski, Boczkowski, and Znamierowski. It is possible that the number of such regional elders, rulers, and kings was greater, but we do not have any information regarding that.

The list of Gypsy overlords according to the existing documents looks as follows:

LIST OF GYPSY OVERLORDS

	Name and Surname	Year of appointment	Privilege issued by	Territories covered by the office
1	Jan (?) Jancy	1647 (?)	Władysław IV (?)	The Crown and G. D. of Lith. (?)
2	Matiasz Karolowicz	1652	John Casimir	The Crown and G. D. of Lith.
3	Sebastian Gałęzowski	1662	John Casimir	The Crown and G. D. of Lith.
4	Jan Nawrotyński	1668	John Casimir	The Crown and G. D. of Lith.
5	Molski	?	John III Sobieski (?)	The Crown and G. D. of Lith.
6	Stanisław Węglowski	1682	John III Sobieski	The Crown and G. D. of Lith.

	Name and Surname	Year of appointment	Privilege issued by	Territories covered by the office
7	Bokiej	?	John III Sobieski (?)	G. D. of Lith. (?)
8	Łukasz Michał Iwaszkiewicz	1697	August II	G. D. of Lith.
9	Jan Dewałtowski	1703	August II	G. D. of Lith. and Żmudź
10	Bonawentura Jan Wiera	1705	August II	The voivodeship of Sanok, Lwów and Przemyśl
11	Kazimierz Wyszomirski	1720	August II	G. D. of Lith. and D. of Livonia
12	Kazimierz Wyszomirski	1720	August II	G. D. of Lith. and D. of Livonia
13	Stanisław Godziemba Niżyński	?	August II	The Crown and G. D. of Lith. (?)
14	Jakub Trzciniński	1729	August II	The Crown and G. D. of Lith.
15	Franciszek Bogusławski	1731	August II	The Crown and G. D. of Lith.
(16)	Marcin Głowacki (king's deputy)	?	?	The Kraków voivodeship
16 (17)	Józef Gozdawa Boczkowski	1761	August III	Małopolska (Lesser Poland)
17 (18)	Iwaszkiewicz	?	Stanisław August Poniatowski(?)	G. D. of Lith.
18 (19)	Jakub Znamierowski	1780	Stanisław August Poniatowski	G. D. of Lith.

Out of the nineteen office holders, we know the texts of the documents, or at least the records with regard to their issuance in the *Sigillata*, for twelve of the appointees. The remaining five names are known from those twelve documents; one of them is known from testimonies recorded in the Kraków acts, and one from the “Manifesto.” It is interesting that when we compare the texts of the available privileges for the other Gypsy overlords, we find that they do not differ greatly from each other and the fundamental rights and duties of the office holders are almost identical and similarly worded for nearly a century and a half. This consistency is intriguing. The question is, how did the persons issuing the documents know how the previous appointment acts were formulated by the subsequent kings of Poland, especially if they did not have the original documents. Naturally, they must have known the assumptions on the policy towards Gypsies, yet this is still far from having analogous documents. Most likely there was a register of documents referring to Gypsies within the files of the royal chancellery that contained descriptions of the issued privileges, or at least material containing their formulations and lists of duties and privileges, which secretaries and other officials could use when preparing documents for subsequent Gypsy overlords. No such collection is known to us, and it is possible that we will not be able to settle this issue because of the considerable losses suffered by archives during the Second World War. Such information would have helped us better understand not only the motivations behind the appointment of Gypsy overlords, but also the general policy towards Gypsies during this period.

DOCUMENTS

[illegible]

ABOVE AND FOLLOWING PAGES

DOC. 1 · IO. 09. 1652. The entry in the Sanok municipal records for the document, issued on August 12, 1652 in Warsaw, by which King John Casimir appoints Maciej Karolowicz the overlord of the Gypsies after the death of Jancyz.

Castrensis Sanocensis Inducta Relationis, t.165 [IAL: F. 15, o. I, No 165]

[illegible]

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regni *enatis* *Princeps* *Joannes* *Sautu* *volis* *officio*
Omni *nomis* *una* *ut* *q* *lib* *Presbiter* *et* *Amore* *Quintus*
maior *no* *sibi* *maior* *no* *ceces* *de* *and* *na* *testimonia* *grati* *adhiberi*
in *um* *sub* *verba* *ac* *fideles* *relligionis* *publi* *liber* *quid*
Quia *sibi* *mater* *et* *doctri* *lib* *dei* *habeas* *amoris*
et *more* *procedit* *no* *et* *ex* *pro* *Religio* *et* *San* *Bo*
na *concordia* *Principis* *Ordinis* *Principis* *Conveniens*
San *Francisci* *Principis* *Sancen* *Guardiani* *et* *omnes* *Con*
veniens *uni* *et* *Sancen* *Principis* *et* *Sancu* *no* *in* *et*
con *no* *Principis* *Quia* *Principis* *a* *Podleski* *Podleski*

1671

Gouern. generalis tuncq[ue], Cuius deinde et idem Anni charta
Civitat[um] de h[abitu] si vult. Sed p[er] d[i]v[ine].

Feria tertia ante fe-
stum S. Laurentij Mar-
tyris proſca. Anno Do-
mini J. O. A. Sexto.
Jarmolewicz Tigarū in Lu-
cro pand. Infamis et Colli-

In ſignatu officij p[ri]oris Capree Caprad Cracovienſis,
Eiusq[ue] delator, Nobilis Georgius Jarmolewicz ſecurip[er]
Joanna Jarosz Tigarū alias Cygana Kobrysz, uti
Conſtatutiō Regia, quod Communiōne in Regno prohibi-
to in diversis locis eiusd[em] Regni duagat, de persona b[e]n[e]-
fici generatim ſibi, Actore vobis Capree Caprad Craco-
viensib[us] officiari magistri Crapp, et per ſe polia Exalta
Regni Polonia, Joanna Jarosz delicti, iuxta ad offensa om[ni]
Capree Caprad Cracoviensib[us] delator et un[de] compaheſſi in
Luro plaurā Legit, adebit Infamis et Colli. Con-
currem Offi. quod Radialis seu officiū condemnant, in
ta Contina sua impoſuerunt, tenore talit[er]
Georgius in vobis Lubomirski Gualis Cracoviensis se
p[re]ſentē Doblyszan Obmiliciz q[uod] Caprad. Feb. Nooni
Jarosz Tigarū alias Cyganin Kobrysz, uti Conſta-
tut Regni quod communiōne in Regno prohibito
in diversis locis eiusd[em] Regni duagat, de persona b[e]n[e]-
fici

ABOVE AND FOLLOWING PAGES

DOC. 2 · 07.08.1646. The entry in the Kraków municipal records for the verdict passed by the Kraków municipal court in the case between Jerzy Jarmolewicz, the plaintiff, and Jan Janczy, the Gypsy kobza-player, with regard to the attack in Kraków.

Castrensia Cracoviensia, t. 910 [APK (I)]

[illegible]

[illegible]

1134 hoc, post cuiusmodi Condemnationes ipsas Curia et Iurisdictiones
 Sui Camerarii et Conscribas Regni, atque affectioni prout statim
 adduxit, sub eadem Curia, prout legem videlicet Infamiam
 et Cetera deventis quorundam decembris, eandem infamiam et
 de Regis polonis Stanislawi eidem antea, prout et
 Capite plebem et pronuntiavit, quorundam probavit, atque
 Mica Supraferens, Ioanna Polonis poloni, ad publicam
 eandem prout Infamiam et Cetera, sub offitio Curia et
 de Capite obiectis, addidit et deputavit, prout addit
 et deputavit prout. Qui quid Stanislawi Supraferens
 ante Thielis poloni, iuxta publicam advenit, amaris
 deputavit sub fideliter videtur, (ita ergo offitio prout)
 Capite Capite prout prout prout prout, publico recipit.
 Quia deinde Supraferens prout Infamiam et Cetera, Super
 plures Curia obtinet, de hodierna huius in Curia prout
 videtur, infamia offitio prout, et multorum huius ad Iudam
 querelam prout compagatorum, alia sanctorum et melle.
 prout. Dicit publicum et proclamavit, eandem infamiam.
 et de Regis Curia prout, eandem antea prout et
 ad notam multum huius videtur et videtur est deduxit.
 Et huius subinde cum eadem offitio et huius prout Curia.
 Capite Curia prout prout prout, Stanislawi Regni
 Curia prout Stanislawi prout poloni, publico recipit. Quia
 tunc prout prout prout prout prout prout prout prout
 prout prout prout prout, in domo Stanislawi Stanislawi, in pla
 ces Stanislawi Curia prout, Stanislawi Curia prout,
 et prout prout prout prout prout prout prout prout
 prout prout

1015

Feria Quinta post Fe-
 stum Sancti Bartholomaei
 apostoli proxima ante
 Domini Millesimo Sex-
 centesimo Octuagesimo Nono
 Oblata Oblata & Liar
 SR. M. H. Węglowski Seruicem
 Ad Officium & Acta Sen. Sacrorum Sapient. Sued.
 personalis Vrs. Illis Stanislaus Węglowski inpa-
 scriptum Extractum ex Actis Sacrorum Sapient. Lub-
 lincens. authentice de promptu Officio Presenti ad
 actum obtulit Petens Eundem Extractum a Seffe-
 rente suscipi & in Acta sua inscribere manda-
 ri sumus affectationi Officii p. Sen. annuen. Sa-
 tum Extractum a post dicto Officere. Rece-
 pit & Actis suis continuat & Tenore tali
 Actum in Castro Lublincensi Feria Secunda ante fe-
 stum Sancti Michaelis archangelus peris Anno Domini
 Millesimo Sexcentesimo Octuagesimo Secundo
 Ad Officium & Acta Sen. Sacrorum Sapient. Lublin.
 personalis Vrs. Illis Stanislaus Węglowski obtulit
 & ad actum porrexit Officio eidem Vrs. inpa-
 scriptas sibi Offerenti per Sacram Regiam Ma-
 iestatem ratione expressum continere collatas
 Manu. Eundem Sacra Regia Maiestatis Subscript.

ABOVE AND FOLLOWING PAGES

DOC. 3 · 25. 08. 1689. The entry in the Kraków municipal records for the document, issued on July 10, 1682, in Jaworów, by which King John III appoints Stanisław Węglowski the elder of the Gypsies in the Commonwealth after the resignation of Molski.

Castrensia Cracoviensia Relationes, t. II6 [APK (I)]

1016

ac. sigillo huius, et cancellarius Regni Communitatis
virescentis, et Quorum, Pender Verborum, et
ceteris eiusmodi
Izobrazci z Bozcy Paski krol Polski Wroclski
Kazimierzowski Paski Praski Chazgowroclski Zm
laski Krowinski Wolynski Podolski Podlaski Sm
lenski Czerwoninski y ziemiechowski Oczagmizem
viniyeczyni Litem naszym Wroclen wobec y Kaz
demu z Osobna komia ro wredrec natey y na
przy Szezliwym panowaniu w krolestwie naszym
od Boga nam powierzonym Velce Karan
namy aby kazdey Hacy y Siamu Ludze dla
wstego natey y zego porzadku podanych Sobie
na zywoczchnosc y od nas postanowionych mieli
Przeto gdy nam doniezono rest przez Panow
Rad narzych y z Blazigacy sz Ledsze Szyganskogo
Narodu podlug dawnego Zwyczaju w zywoczchno
sci nad Sobą po Resignacyi Slachetnego chot
skiego dla porzadku swego mieniacz Pedy
wazac zaliczenie zdawna Ustawicene Woin
ne Polugi Wroclskiego Stanislaw Wroclowski
ro Rego ten onymusz y naprzywiesze Przeto
z narow nad takowymi Blazigacymi sz dai
y Pasterowac obmyshkomu iakoz dajemy y
cetera y z tego razmizyeczyni Przypwiderem
Narozm obcy ktorecc Przypwideru naszego
pomizgiony szgd Zwyznaczosc zgo wseyt
kremi Nalezyzymi Obcedientami y Szadami
ryches Szygansko y innymi powynosciami
Izobrazci (Pender Marinkowski)

44

1017

[illegible]

1018

nalezyte ismu oddawali Na E dla bezpogwiny
 Rzecz nasza pociągawcy przecz Naszko
 ronną pociągawcy do kazakiny Dam w Jaworo-
 wisz Knia Dzierżawego Miercia Lęca Loku Tysia
 znego bezpogwiny Amdeżawego Wrorego Pi-
 notawia naszego IX Jan Koch Jemu Sigdi Legni
 Przeciągawcy wot Czganami Wodżawego Stanuta
 wa Węglawskiego Originale Vero Supradicta
 rum. Tawum per Tawum Legum Miercia collata-
 rum Tawum Officium ab Officio Tawum recept. de
 Tawum recepte sibi extradit Officium Tawum
 Tawum. Tawum Tawum Tawum Tawum Tawum
 Tawum. Tawum Tawum Tawum Tawum Tawum

312H.

Hieniarouski; Marianna Hieniarouska.
 Cujus quid scripti originale idq. offerens
 illico ab Officio presentis recepit.

996. **Oblata Literas Privilegij S. R. M. A. S.**

Ad Officium et Accusatorum Castrense Capitanum
 Gar personaliter veniens Generosus Jacobus
 Trzciński in transscriptas Literas Privilegij Regni
 Regis Mithis super Donum Regiminis Gentis
 Ignoratus in Regno Poloniae et Magna Ducatus
 Lithuaniae reperit iure sibi Officium ab
 ead. Sacra Regis Mithis datas benigne colla-
 tas Officio et Accusatoribus Castren-
 sibus Gar ad acticand. dedit. Petens
 easd. Literas Privilegij Regni Regis Mithis
 a se Officium suscipi et in Accusatoribus
 Castrense Capitanum Gar inscribere permitti.
 Cujus affectioni Officium presentis an-
 nuendo protulit Literas Privilegij Regni
 Regis Majestatis ad eod. Officium suscep-
 tit, et in Accusatoribus inscribere permittit.
 de Tenore tali.

Augustus Rex et Dux Lodovici et R. R. R.
 Wlodek Nigze Litvici, Rusci, Prusici, da-
 zowiecki, Imuclski, Kijowski, Wlodekinski,
 Podolski, Podlaski, Smolenski, Brestski,
 Siemirski, y Gornichowski, a Dnieperem
 Nigze Laski y Gleskor.

Bentymuemy iym Literas Privilegij
 Nassyj uszow uszow y Hardemu eza-
 bna, Kornu otyjy ezedgice malsy osoli-
 cie i ednake uszelkim Wroclom ezei
 wodegim Prusici, Litvici, Siemirski
 Gornichski y Gleskor, sabb se Koronci
 iako y wroclim Liegum Litvici
 se malye Palecone merita Wroclomego
 Jakub.

ABOVE AND FOLLOWING PAGES

DOC. 4 · II. 08. 1729, Warsaw. King August II appoints Jakub Trzciński the Gypsy king in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the death of Zulicki.

Castrensia Cracoviensia Relationes, t. 153 [APK (I)]

Jakubowi Trzcińskiemu a Siostrze jego do Pana
 i Zwycaiałow Narodowych i Anrecessorow
 Najwyżeh Królów Polskich aby naród Cygan:
 ski, iako w Koronie tak i w Wielkim
 Xięstwie Litewskim tudzież i w innych
 Prowincjach do Królestwa Naszego nale:
 żących i włostrych regaliów należących
 groził spogł być utrzymujący tudzież
 aby w Artykułach i Sprawach swoich
 Purna miał Obronę i Protekcję wakuje:
 cę na tancerz, Urogi Królestwa Cygan:
 skiego, post Janu Włodzkiego Złotego
 do Dłgi i Dyspozycji Naszej przy padł.
 Trmusz Włodzkiego Jakubowi Trzcińskie:
 mu, dać i konfrować umyślił i ten
 iakoś dać i konfrować, niniejszym
 Listem Przywilejem Naszym, i jego Kró:
 wole i mocem będzie, pomienionym Włodz:
 kowi Jakubowi Trzcińskiemu, Urogi i Jurysdyk:
 cji, Naszej zwyczaj Praw i Zwycaiałow
 tak i w Koronie iako i w Wielkim
 Xięstwie Litewskim i innych Prowincjach
 do Królestwa Polskiego należących na
 wszelkim miejscu iako prawde i w
 Król Cyganski, nad pomienionym
 Jagołem Trzcińskiem i należącym estate,
 Królestwa cum Saculrati Vice Reges
 in locum sui Substituendi zastępowe
 i zastępowe, za Substitutas eas i Ewe:
 Reja swego, którego by kolwiek sobie
 et nomine et Cognomine obrat Cielak
 Honoratus et Capaten Personam bez uci
 mienia pomienionego Narodu gelygo
 Coram Actis quibusvis Casum za Vice:
 Reja obierze i utwierdzi. Wice aby i ta:

3120.

Nowemu Vice Królowi Cygani postawieni by li
 miecy. Chcemy y rozkazać imy, mozę, którego
 rozkazu y woli naszej Królewskiej. Kato-
 łowi Cyganskiemu in iungimus aby już
 od iqd pomienionego Wrodołego Jachub
 Trewnskiego, zw. i. Komego Regda, Serdar we-
 go Cyganskiego, znali, przyjmali, y onymu
 wezwołanym dawanym Zwyczojnom (Zub Wice-
 Regda, y Subdyktom, Jego) we wezwołan-
 powinnosciach y obowiązach, których po-
 wali as do ostatniego Króla, Jego Kró-
 A pomieć się podobny takowy Urząd
 doszedł byt na Dwie, swoje przez Przym-
 ley Nasz Wrodoły, Stanisław Godwin-
 Kierpiski a takowemu Urzędowi, wyje-
 dney za Granicę, już oddał. A Kome-
 za dany, nie czyni ani się należyce spr-
 ewować, y owsem przez niego pomienioną
 Harod Cyganski w Królewstwie naszym
 nie ma, y nad toż, zwyczajnosci dy-
 natio, byje. Tacyż, niema pomienioną
 Wrodoły, Go do iednego Nierozu-
 mome Wrodołemu Jachubowi Trewnskie-
 mu, emiwey in, przesłachac, ani Przym-
 leiom naszym, którego beneficja abuz-
 est zaszycać się na królewstwie, pod
 Izarą, przez ich gwarantowideł, Przym-
 leiom naszych w Francji, Leosani, y
 episcopa, A z takich w miechowskich
 Prowincjach, Królestwa Naszego, wmy-
 dnuć się, aby takowe, które przez
 ich, Sine ulla facultate, Ros-
 rzych prerogatyw y woli, które mi-
 powinni Królowi Cyganskemu y Ros-
 mi sposobami Cyganów, aggrawus y
 depadusz,

3127

depakciuq do Daniz y Gabellow przymu-
 racia y tym podobne cięzary y opresyie
 na nich zakładają. Wice dajemy nam ter-
 rażnicy sejmowi Naszemu Czynuścicownikom
 mu Krolowi Cyganstwowi, takowych Pra-
 wosyn Compensacji. Pro parrey, scigne
 y Sedicia przewiedzione nam nich, do Jze-
 kucji przyprowadze. Chycuzymy, kęz do
 Pomas y Maia mniejszych Nasz poak Ma-
 rzych, ze pomienionego Urodzonego Jazhu
 Tracinskiego, od Polskij odwiecie czynu-
 gonego flordu, Krolowa Cyganstkiego
 y podobnego uzywania pochykow ob-
 wyncji y Emolumenta Jegoz mie odda-
 wamy, ani moey odolatania nikomu nie
 dajemy. Co y Najsmieyszy Naszcy Prasi-
 nia, Prawa Nasze Krolowskie Naszcy
 Kosciołowski Katołickiego w cate
 zachowujemy. Nacosie dla lepczy, czynu-
 Acha Nasz podpisaney. Pięćć Krom-
 na, przyrzymy rozkazaliamy. Dany w
 Warszawie Dnia XI Sierpnia smie-
 ca Roku Traskiego MDCCXXIX Pa-
 nowania Naszego XXXIII. Roku August
 Rex Locus Signi Regni. Joannes Ba-
 iottius Sacra Regia Mitis Secretarius
 manu ppria Quorum quidem Liberum
 Privilegij Sacra Regia Mitis Originale
 Jeleni Alterens illico ab officio per-
 senti recepit.

Gypsies as a Criminal Element in the 18th century

The document that symbolically closes the 17th century and reflects the earlier, rather favorable attitude towards Gypsies, is the introductory letter for Wasyl Sawczan, issued by the grand deputy-treasurer, Benedykt Paweł Sapieha, in February 1700. Sawczan is referred to as “the Senior Administrator and Judge for the Gypsies in Vlach Land,” and the letter for him and his group was issued in Siemiatycze, in Podlasie. Much like the documents we already know from the 16th century referring to Piotr Rotemberg, and documents from the nineties of the 17th century, it belongs to the collection of acts from the former archive in Königsberg. Benedykt Paweł Sapieha issued the letter as the grand deputy-treasurer of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and addressed it to administrators and leaseholders of royal cities and villages, requesting them to grant safe passage to Wasyl Sawczan, who “is travelling with his company for food and as a way of providing themselves with bread.”¹ Sapieha also appeals that the group not be hindered “on the roads, in lodgings, while letting their livestock graze”² (*Et.—Min.*, 110 b, Nr 11, 16; DOC. 1). This act closes the period of time when Gypsies were receiving introductory letters, and when representatives of local authorities and landed property owners were making their wandering easier by granting relevant letters that were at the same time certificates of good conduct.

Gypsies could still earn their living by trade and craft without major obstacles. They also often requested legal help themselves, usually with regard to settling disputes between Gypsy groups. Some

¹ Translated from Polish: “jedzie z kompanią swoją dla pożywienia, i sposobienia sobie sztuki chleba.”

² Translated from Polish: “na gościńcach, noclegach, popasach przeszkody.”

of them were leading settled lives, yet wanderers were also accepted. They were engaged in various occupations, including that of estate servants on the properties of nobility. Only a small percentage of documents from the 17th century refer to thefts and crimes. This was a good period for Gypsies in the Commonwealth and a time of good relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies.

In the mid-17th century, the office of a superior of the Gypsies, which was appointed by the king, had been established. The privileges issued by August II, as well as the appointment by August III, indicate that for the entire 18th century, this way of exerting control over Gypsies was perceived as a good one, and there were continuous attempts to build good relations between the wanderers and the other inhabitants of the country, as well as to subordinate them to the same rules and duties that obliged the rest of the population with the help of the institution of Gypsy kings and elders. Yet the attitude of the country's population as well as local authorities towards Gypsies changed fundamentally during this period, just as the image of Gypsies and their way of living did.

Complaints against Gypsies outnumber all other types of 18th century documents. The records demonstrate the deepening conflict and distance between Gypsies and the rest of society. The letter of deputy-treasurer Sapieha is the last known introductory letter granted to the Gypsies. Only towards the end of that century do we see several letter-passports issued by landed property owners. These letters were meant to ensure access to fairs or markets, and certified that their holders were not vagrants and were fundamentally different in that they were limited to a narrowly defined territory and were not documents enabling unlimited travel, as the letter for Sawczan or those presented earlier.

The letter issued by Benedykt Sapieha indicates that by the end of the 17th century the migratory flow from Vlachia and Transylvania through eastern parts of the country to the central territories of the Commonwealth had intensified. Such names as Mityga and Sawczan do not occur, as far as I know, in the territory of Poland today. They were either absorbed by the following, more numerous waves of migration from Vlachia and Transylvania that arrived in the second half of the 19th century, or the Mitygas and the Sawczans that moved

further to the east. The latter is more likely when one considers the migration of Gypsies from the Commonwealth to central Russia as a result of the worsening living conditions in the country. This assumption is further supported by Russian literature, as well as source materials on the subject that point to more frequent arrivals of Gypsies from the Commonwealth.

This is not the only direction of migration for Gypsies in the territories of the Commonwealth. They were also arriving from the west, just as 200 years ago, predominantly from Hungary, more precisely from then Hungarian Slovakia, and Czechia. Yet, these could also have been wandering groups from the Balkans.

The overwhelming majority of 18th century documents referring to Gypsies are complaints and testimonies telling us about crimes committed by Gypsies, most commonly thefts. Few records refer to different issues. This is a very surprising change, not only in comparison to the 15th and 16th centuries, but also with what we find in 17th-century documents. This is difficult to explain. It is rather unlikely that the documents illustrate the true state of affairs, that there was a sudden rise in the number of crimes committed by Gypsies. Something else must have been the reason for the fact that the authorities started to take an interest almost exclusively in thefts by Gypsies. We also cannot be sure whether the accusations were legitimate. As we will see later, some of the accusations were the result of stereotypical thinking and common prejudices, according to which Gypsies were people who broke the law, whose arrival heralded troubles and compelled watchfulness in order to protect one's property and cattle. This does not necessarily illustrate a sudden increase in the number of crimes committed by Gypsies, but rather the change in attitude towards them, as well as the deepening of the barrier and loosening of ties between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. Gypsies, it seems, apart from those accused of stealing something, became invisible in Commonwealth society. It is clear that the very turn of the century was not the reason for these changes, but this process must have been going on for some time before it found its reflection in the archival records. The society of the Commonwealth was changing, the population was rising, the cities were expanding, and together with them the bourgeois stratum was growing. One of the effects of

the social changes taking place, including changes in mentality, was the growing distance towards the Gypsies. Trade contacts between Gypsies and non-Gypsies became less regular, there were no Gypsies employed in service. There is not a single record of a situation where Gypsies referred to a non-Gypsy institution with regard to settling a dispute and issuing a verdict, as they had so frequently been done before. A division had been drawn: Gypsies and non-Gypsies started to look at one another in a more and more hostile way.

We know about twenty acts from the 18th century. The majority of the cases representing conflicts came from southern Poland—Kraków, Biecz, and Sącz. Only a few records refer to the eastern territories of the Commonwealth. The documents referring to the private properties of the Radziwiłłs and Sanguszkos will be discussed in a separate chapter. The changes that took place during the times of the last king, Stanisław August, and the following collapse of Poland and the legislation of the partitioning states make it necessary to discuss this period separately. For this reason, I will conclude discussion of the 18th-century documents with the seventies of that century.

Nevertheless, in some justified cases I go beyond this imaginary boundary. That is why I believe it is necessary to discuss here the final nomination of a Gypsy superior, issued by Stanisław August, because this was a continuation of the attempts to subordinate Gypsies to state authority, to find an appropriate place for them, and to somehow tie them to the country and its population. The cessation of this practice, the death of the last “Gypsy king” appointed by the crown, meant a definitive end to the attempts to organize the Gypsies’ cohabitation with the non-Gypsy majority of the population, with the help of an appointed superior. In a similar manner, going beyond this *caesura* appears justified to me with regard to the documents related to the Radziwiłłs’ properties.

As it has been mentioned already, the majority of documents from this century refer to conflicts with Gypsies and their wrongdoings. The protocols of testimonies and complaints demonstrate that the distance between Gypsies and non-Gypsies increased considerably, and the character of Gypsy groups changed. The first of such cases we encounter in the Vilnius municipal acts. On August 6, 1726, a complaint by a plenipotentiary parish priest from the village of Muśniki

was entered into the books. He complained about the owner of the village, a protector of the Gypsies, as he refers to him, as well as about the Gypsies “Mateusz Drozdowicz, Tomek Brozowicz, Jan Piotrowicz, Mikołaj Piotrowicz, Michał Soroczyński, a locksmith together with his disciple as wrongdoers”³ (*Wileń. grodz. sąd*, 1726, 894–894v). The plaintiff claimed that lord Muśnicki “having forgotten the strictness of the Commonwealth laws and the Sejm Constitutions with regard to people who give protection to suspicious people and Gypsies and Jews,”⁴ and provide them shelter, made it possible for Gypsies to inflict harm to different people (*ibid.*, 894v). From the text of this complaint we learn that the Gypsies were sitting in an inn in the nearby village and that, “after first drinking vodka during the day, at night they opened the brewery lock with a key or a master key and stole a cauldron and cattle.”⁵ The leaseholder of the inn, “since the lock had not been destroyed, though the cauldron and cattle were taken, realized that it must have been done by the mentioned Gypsies and no one else”⁶ (*ibid.*, 895). Following the tracks left by the cart that they had driven away with, he reached the village of Muśniki, and thus he requested the owner of the village to return his goods, but to no avail. That is why he called for putting the Gypsies on trial, so that they would return the stolen goods and cover the court fees. We do not know the further course of this case, or whether the complaint was legitimate. If the Gypsies did indeed steal the goods and then found shelter in Muśniki, and the owner not only did not try to capture them, but also clearly avoided that, we could indeed assume that he somehow benefitted from their stay, and if not from

³ Translated from Polish: “Mateusza Drozdowicza, Tomka Brozowicza, Jana Piotrowicza, Mikołaja Piotrowicza, Michała Soroczyńskiego ślusarza z uczniem swoim jako złoczyńców.”

⁴ Translated from Polish: “zapomniawszy surowości praw pospolitych i Konstytucji Sejmowych strictissime opisanych na takowych ichmościów, którzy by podejrzanym ludziom a i to Cyganom i Żydom dawali protekcję.”

⁵ Translated from Polish: “pierwej w dzień pijąc gorzałkę, a potem nocnym czasem odemknąwszy kluczem, czyli też wytrychem, zamek u browaru kocioł i banię ukradli.”

⁶ Translated from Polish: “ze kłódka nic nie była zepsowana, a szkoda w browarze przez ukradzenie kotła i bani jest, domyślił się, że to nie insza robota jeno pomienionych ślusarzów Cyganów.”

their thefts, then at least from their craft skills. It seems that these were not wandering Gypsies, but rather that they lived permanently in Muśniki or nearby, hence their acquaintance with the owner of Muśniki. The claimant must also have known them if he was able to give their names for the records in the municipal book, and even knew that Michał Soroczyński, the Gypsy locksmith, had an apprentice who was sitting with them in the inn.

The following cases from the south of Poland are much more serious. In the Crown Archive in Warsaw (the AGAD collections) there are two documents different from any of those previously discussed. They show that not only had the conflicts intensified, but also there were groups living off robberies, and they sometimes were so impudent that they even attempted to blackmail representatives of the authorities.

**“Because the Gypsy does not sow or plow,
but feeds on what he steals”⁷**

On June 17, 1732, an act was prepared in Latin from which we learn that several days earlier the Silesia authorities were informed that a group of Gypsies had been staying in the village of Bobrek. This village belonged to count Wielopolski and was located in Poland, close to the border, from where they were making forays of theft and robbery to Silesian cities, and “also not long ago, in the town of Mysłowice, they arrived at night and dared to rob several Silesian people and with their loot went back to Bobrek in Poland and they exchanged part of the loot for food in the inn and other places as payment. The administrator of the village, despite repeated requests, objected to the return of the looted goods”⁸ (*Arch. Koron. Warsz.*, cart. 25a, Nr 142, 1). From further on in the text of the document we learn that several weeks earlier the authorities of Pszczyna in Silesia had arrested two

⁷ Translated from Polish: “Bo Cygan nie sieje ani orze, tylko co ukradnie tym się żywi.”

⁸ Translated from Polish: “również bardzo niedawno w miasteczku Mysłowice, w czasie nocnym wpadli i kilku mieszkańców śląskich złupić ważyli się, i tak z łupem do Bobrku w Polsce powrócili, i tamże część łupów w gospodzie i gdzie indziej za żywność na zapłatę dali. Zarządca wsi mimo ponawianych żądań odmówił zwrotu rzeczy zabranych.”

Gypsies, a man and a woman, and after the trial had started, the Gypsy leaders sent a letter trying to influence the course of justice. In addition to this, they threatened the residents of Pszczyna coming to Polish villages: “the comrades held in jail should be immediately released, if not, within a short period of time many in Pszczyna will be complaining about poverty and ill fortune”⁹ (ibid.). The Gypsies’ letter with its threats was attached to the act. The authors humbly pleaded: “we beg for your mercy to set this Gypsy free, since we have had a great misfortune, they cut our girl who is now dying of many wounds”¹⁰ (ibid., 3). Then the authors’ tone changes to threatening: “if [---] will not be released and that girl dies, we will not forget our injuries, because a Gypsy does not sow or plow, but feeds on what he steals”¹¹ (ibid., 3–4). After this, they promise that if they “will be released, we will not take revenge nor, will we stay in this area”¹² (ibid., 4). The persons who signed the document are Franciszek and Macy Wasilowski. I would like to draw the attention to this detail, as the surnames of these Gypsy leaders will resurface in the acts several years later.

We do not know how numerous this pack of thieves was, but clearly this was not an ordinary gang. In this case we encounter, as the mention of the girl seems to indicate, a community of not only men but also their families. The Gypsies feel their power and probably the fear of the local population, and try to blackmail the authorities of Pszczyna. Also not without significance here is the quiet acceptance of attacks and robberies in the Silesian villages on the part of the local officials, and the provision of shelter for the Gypsies in the

⁹ Translated from Polish: “aby owi w areszcie zatrzymani towarzysze bez zwłoki byli uwolnieni, jeżeli nie, w krótkim czasie w Pszczynie wielu powinno skarżyć się w biedzie i nieszczęściu.”

¹⁰ Translated from Polish: “zebrzemy łaski pańskiej o wypuszczenie tego Cygana, gdyż my mamy wielką krzywdę, co nam dziewczkę porąbali, która musi od wielkich razów umierać.”

¹¹ Translated from Polish: “jeżeli [---] nie będzie wypuszczony, i ta dziewczka umrze, musimy swojej krzywdy nie zapomnieć, bo Cygan nie sieje, ani orze, tylko co ukradnie tym się żywi.”

¹² Translated from Polish: “będzie wypuszczony, nie będziemy się mścić ani też więcej w tej dziedzinie przebywać.”

village owned by Wielopolski. From the document we learn that the group had already committed robberies several times predominantly in Silesian towns and villages, and had escaped with the loot to the village of Bobrek. This partially explains the insolence of the Wasilowskis having shelter and support from Wielopolski.

We do not know whether the report and the letter attached to it resulted in any reaction from the state authorities. If so, it probably had not been very efficient, since the name of Franciszek Wasilowski appears again in the testimonies of a member of a gang living off robberies, prowling in the borderland area. Probably easy access to the wealthy towns and villages of Silesia with its well-off families, rich merchants, and the possibility to hide from justice, were significant elements contributing to the escapades of robbery and theft committed by Gypsies from Poland in Silesia both earlier and in the 18th century.

The protocols of the testimonies of two brothers who travelled with a group of Gypsies in Poland also indicate that the routes of their robbery forays followed the Silesian borderlands, and they went looting into Silesia on many occasions. As a result of a brawl at an inn, the two brothers, Michał and Wawrzyniec Głowacki, ended up in prison and their testimonies present rich material with respect to two Gypsy groups. Franciszek Wasilowski, known to us from the previous case, also appears in their testimonies.

The testimonies of Michał and Wawrzyniec Głowacki were recorded on November 6, 1738. Both were born in Wielkopolska (Greater Poland), the western part of the country. According to their testimonies, their mother was a Gypsy and the close ties with the Gypsies of the father originated from his business relations as well as his office. This is indicated by the concluding part of Wawrzyniec's testimony where we learn that his father was the superior of the Gypsies and was supposed to collect the per capita tax. As a result, the boys were brought up with Gypsies. After leading a settled life in their youth, both brothers joined a group of Gypsies and were travelling with them, sometimes committing offences. The last fragment of the testimony clearly states this: "How come you joined the Gypsies, not being born a Gypsy? Because I had a long acquaintance with them, as all the Gypsies in the Kraków voivodeship were under

my Father's command and he collected levies from them"¹³ (*Castr. Crac.*, t. 502, 1738, 797).

From Wielkopolska they set out on a journey along the route towards the southeast, in the direction of Częstochowa. This part of the route, from Częstochowa and borderland of the Kraków Lands and on to Śląsk to the south, was precisely described by the brothers. The high level of detail in their description makes it likely that they were tortured, or otherwise it is difficult to imagine why they would have been willing to incriminate themselves so strongly. Marcin Głowacki began his testimony with the following statement: "My father's name was Marcin Głowacki, my mother's Elżbieta, they both died [---] my father traded in horses and we all lived off that, my mother also lived off fortune-telling and was also going to estates, looking for food"¹⁴ (*ibid.*, 789). When his parents died, he went towards Silesia looking for employment in service. When he failed to find employment, he joined a group of three Gypsies and they committed their first robbery near Częstochowa. At night they stole four horses from a pasture, "and we came to the village of Lubojna [---] where we entered the house of hard-working"¹⁵ Walek, asking him if he would buy the horses, he replied I would if they are not expensive and we took for them eighty-eight zlotys and from there we went to Zurada and we dug in on a peasant['s property] at night and we took one and a half chunks of lard, a sheepskin coat and a skirt"¹⁶ (*ibid.*, 789–790). From the description of the next theft we learn the names of the three accomplices, one of whom is Franciszek Wasielowski,

¹³ Translated from Polish: "Jakim sposobem dostałeś się do Cyganów nie będąc urodzonym Cyganem? Z tej racji iż miałem dawną znajomość z nimi, ponieważ Ojciec mój miał komendę nad wszystkimi w województwie całym krakowskim zostającymi, i dań od nich odbierał."

¹⁴ Translated from Polish: "Ojcu mojemu było imię Marcin Głowacki, Matce Elżbieta, oboje nie żyją [---] ojciec mój różnie końmi handlował, i z tego razem żywiliśmy się, matka także moja z wróżenia żyła i po dworach różnie chodziła szukając pożywienia."

¹⁵ Hard-working (*pracowity* in Polish) was a term referring to someone of peasant origin.

¹⁶ Translated from Polish: "i przyjechaliśmy do wsi Lubojna [---] gdzie wleźliśmy do chałupy pracowitego Walka pytając go się jeżeliby koni nie kupił, odpowiedział że kupię, byle niedrogo, i wzięliśmy za nie złotych osiemdziesiąt osiem, stamtąd poszliśmy do Zurady i podkopaliśmy się do chłopca nocnym sposobem, i wzięliśmy półtora [---] półcia słoniny, kozuch i spódnice."

known from robberies in Pszczyna six years earlier. Then they stole horses from a pasture and, afraid of being caught since they had been circulating in the neighbourhood for some time already, they took the horses as far as to Kraków: “and we came to a merchant Antoni Genda, asking him if he would buy a pair of horses from us, and this Genda told us, I will because I need horses now, and if you could find another pair somewhere, I would also buy them, whereas this Genda knew that the horses were stolen ones”¹⁷ (*ibid.*, 791). Not far from Mianocice, about 50 km from Kraków, Michał Głowacki and his companions met a group of Gypsy women. Then they headed north, in the direction of Wiślica, together, “where we stopped in an inn for vodka.”¹⁸ They also enjoyed themselves in an inn in a neighboring village where later there was a brawl with the locals. A local officer that they met told them: “You should know that you will be punished for drinking and dancing in this inn; at that point Franciszek Wasielowski caught the horse by its harness and begged the deputy-starosta not to make a commotion about it”¹⁹ (*ibid.*, 792). Wasielowski, as it seems, was of a cheeky character and tended to act insolently. (I would like to remind the reader that he is the one who signed the letter threatening the authorities of Pszczyna with harming the local population if they did not set his accomplices free.) The testimonies continue with a description of the conflict and a fight, which ended in the arrest of the Głowackis, who were tried, put on a cart, and taken to Kraków.

The testimony of Michał Głowacki is rich in detail, showing the route of their wanderings and registering the scenes of their entertainment and brawls, yet there are also many important issues left unexplained. We do not know how long their crime spree lasted before they were caught. Also, there were four of them that took

¹⁷ Translated from Polish: “i przyszliśmy do kupca Antoniego Gendy, pytając go się jeżeliby u nas nie kupił pary koni, odpowiedział tenże Genda że kupię, bo mi potrzeba teraz koni i jeżeli byście mogli jeszcze gdzie dostać choć pary, to bym kupił, gdzie tenże Genda wiedział że kradzione są te konie.”

¹⁸ Translated from Polish: “gdzie wstąpiliśmy do karczmy na wódkę.”

¹⁹ Translated from Polish: “wiedzieć o tym, że będziecie za to karani, że tu w pańskiej karczmie pijecie i tańczycie; w tym Franciszek Wasielowski uchwycił konia za lice, prosząc podstarościego aby hałasów jakich nie porobił.”

part in the robberies at the Silesia borderlands and, at least according to Michał Głowacki's testimony, his brother was not with them. The joining of the brothers must have taken place later. The descriptions of the bouts of drinking and dances near the forest remind us of the contemporary popular tradition of *pacziw* among Gypsies, a festive commemoration of the meeting of wandering Gypsies related to one another, which is accompanied by drinking, eating, and often dancing. The meeting with the Gypsy women is also intriguing; according to the testimony, they were travelling on their own, a very rare situation in later periods (it is possible that women would set out on their own for local villages to do fortune-telling, but they would come back to their group for the night). Even more unlikely is the situation that they invited strange men for vodka and then wandered and stayed for the night somewhere along the road together. This would have resulted in the disdain of both parties by their groups and possibly ostracism. Thus, either these were not alien women and must have belonged to the closer family circle, or this was an encounter with individuals from disintegrated groups, which did not observe the norms that even today amongst all the Gypsies in Poland define the relations between individuals of the opposite sex belonging to different groups.

The testimony of Michał's younger brother, Wawrzyniec, was recorded on the same day. Wawrzyniec confirms his brother's testimony with regard to their childhood, that they were not yet stealing then, because they were living with their parents and their father traded in horses. He testified that after the death of his father, his relatives took him and travelled to the south in the direction of the border with Silesia. Wawrzyniec started his thieving in Torzeniec. The group had stopped for a week, he testified, and was making forays in Silesia "and there we were stealing what we could get, such as peasant dresses, skirts, money from pockets, women's kerchiefs, and whatever we could get we were selling to peasants in Torzeniec"²⁰ (*ibid.*, 795).

²⁰ Translated from Polish: "i tam czego mogliśmy dostać, tośmy ukradli, jako to mianowicie suknie chłopskie, spódnice, z kieszeni pieniądze, chusty białogłowskie i czego się mogło dostać, i to wszystko w Torzencu, gdzieśmy stali, chłopom sprzedawaliśmy."

A little later, also in Silesia, they stole two horses, which they sold to the leaseholder of the village of Skomlin, where they stayed for some time. The buyer said to the Gypsy *wójt* Jan Kuliński: “Do not be afraid of anything, if a German came here for these horses I would shoot his head off”²¹ (ibid.). Wawrzyniec added: “and the other Gypsy men and women who were going to Silesia were stealing whatever they could get”²² (ibid.). This implies that the group to which Wawrzyniec Głowacki belonged to travelled with their families, or at least with women. Next they moved to the east in the direction of Częstochowa. The length of the periods of their stay in different villages along the way varied, sometimes it was just a couple of days and sometimes two or three weeks, but longer stays also happened, from six to ten weeks. It is clear from the testimonies that these stays were at the same time a base for their thieving escapades to Silesia, and that during their period of wandering, Wawrzyniec Głowacki and his group did not steal anything in Poland, or at least they did not admit to any such theft or robbery. All of their thefts were in the territory of Silesia, whereas they were selling their loot in the villages where they were temporarily staying. Longer stays were related to the winter periods: “We went to Rembielice and there we stayed for three weeks, stealing very sporadically, as we were afraid of the tracks in the snow, only the Gypsy women were going to Silesia and were bringing back whatever they could get there”²³ (ibid.). Next they admit: “We lived solely off the loot from Silesia”²⁴ (ibid., 796–797).

Probably when spring came, the Gypsies from Wawrzyniec’s group left the Silesia borderlands and headed east. In Błędów (to the west of Kraków) they met the group that Wawrzyniec’s brother, Michał Głowacki, travelled with. According to Wawrzyniec’s testimony, the stay in Błędów was a short one: “We stayed there just for

²¹ Translated from Polish: “nie obawiaj się niczego, żeby tu miał Niemiec po te konie przyjąć, to bym mu w łeb strzelił.”

²² Translated from Polish: “insi zaś Cyganie i Cyganki, którzy zachodzili na Śląsk, czego mogli dostać to ukradli.”

²³ Translated from Polish: “poszliśmy do Rembielic i tam staliśmy niedziel trzy, niewiele się kradzieżą bawiąc, gdyż my się dla śladu śniegu obawiali, gdzie tylko Cyganki na Śląsko chodziły i czego tam mogły dostać to przyniosły.”

²⁴ Translated from Polish: “bośmy się tylko z fantów na Śląsku kradzionych żywili.”

a week, we were afraid of any misfortunes, as the Gypsies from that other group were stealing horses in Poland”²⁵ (ibid.). The meeting of the two groups probably was not accidental. I believe they must have known the town from their previous wanderings. Later they travelled on their own until their next meeting that ended in drinking, a brawl with the peasants and their arrest.

There are many unknowns in the story that we can trace from the Głowackis’ testimonies, yet combining both accounts allows us to clear up some of them. Wawrzyniec’s testimony is much fuller, richer in details regarding the group’s wandering, and the way it functioned. What follows from it is that stealing from the Silesian population was treated by landed property owners and other buyers in a favorable way. We can claim this on the basis of the fact that the Gypsies were not driven away and could stay for weeks on successive private estates.

The wandering described by Wawrzyniec covered a period of nine months, if we count only their stays and not the time needed for moving from place to place. If we add the days spent on the road between successive longer stays, the account covers a period of at least a year, from spring to spring, or even until summer of the next year. I believe that we can safely assume that the period of activity of Michał’s group was similar. Michał testified that he was travelling from Wielkopolska in the company of three Gypsies, including Wasielowski. Their common travelling and some other elements of the testimonies seem to indicate that the Głowackis, Wasielowski, and others were not strangers to one another. Maybe they were related through the mother or father, or their acquaintance dated back to the times when Głowackis’ father was collecting taxes from Gypsies. The meeting of both groups in Błędów could not have been accidental. This also indicates that both groups, not just the brothers, knew one another as well as the territory of their travels and thieving escapades.

It remains a mystery why the two brothers were travelling separately in different groups. In Wawrzyniec’s group there was a Gypsy named Ochocki Matyjasz, whom he referred to in his testimony as a brother-in-law. Wawrzyniec’s group was travelling with families, thus

²⁵ Translated from Polish: “tylko tydzień staliśmy, bośmy się obawiali nieszczęścia jakiego, gdyż z tamtej rotę Cyganie tu po Polsce konie kradli.”

probably the brothers' sister was also in that group if her husband was there. Wawrzyniec only mentions Gypsy women, and so his sister must have also been counted as a Gypsy. This is a meaningful detail, if we take into account the relations of the Głowacki brothers with the Gypsies. Michał's group did not travel with women. The method of stealing and robbing they chose, mainly in the Polish territories and not in Silesia, required greater mobility and that was probably the reason why their group during their thieving escapades consisted exclusively of men. On their way they met a group of Gypsy women. According to the testimony, the women invited them to an inn for vodka and gave them some money. They travelled together for some time, staying together for the night and drinking together in inns. It is not clear at what point and where the Gypsy women disappeared, because the brothers do not mention their presence during the brawl that resulted in their arrest. The description of the meeting with the women by Michał is strange, as it does not appear from Michał's testimony that the meeting had been arranged, and the women had been acquainted with them. Yet, why else would the women invite them to the inn and share their money with them? Travelling and staying for the night together also confirms that the two groups were not strangers to one another. Thus, we should assume that the meeting was not accidental; the women belonged to Michał's group and probably were wives of the men from the group, and their separate wandering was temporary and part of an established plan.

There is no mention of children in any of the groups. They might have been present in Wawrzyniec's group, as their stays were longer, and we know there were women in the group. It is certain, however, that in Michał's group there were no children. We can assume that they were left at the place of their permanent stay, a base somewhere, together with the elderly who would be a burden during the group's thefts.

The 18th-century acts contain several more significant documents in the context of the history of Gypsies and their relations with local population. A vivid account of a brawl, involving residents of the villages of Brzeźnica and Wola Justowska (today a district of Kraków) and Gypsies, was entered in the Kraków court acts (*Teutonica*, t. 97, 429). The testimonies of both parties of the dispute paint a picture

of the incident and allow us to reconstruct the course of the conflict. The events took place in September 1733. We can see that although the negative stereotype of Gypsies already existed during this period, it was not so widespread as to effectively divide Gypsies and non-Gypsies, as was the case in later years.

The testimonies of the participants of the incident illustrate the background of the conflict. The account is a long one because there are several persons testifying, and all of them are questioned according to the same formula. The estate of one Zawada was robbed one night. Looking for the perpetrators, the sons of the injured party came across a peasant who had bought a piece of garment from Gypsies. They took it away, but Zawada wanted to recover the rest of the lost goods as well. He found out that some Gypsies were staying at an inn not far away from the village of Brzeźnica, and they fell under his suspicion. The injured party headed for Brzeźnica with a group of peasants, not waiting for the permission of the owner of the village to arrest the Gypsies at the Brzeźnica inn. Outside of the inn there was a brawl. The Gypsy men were not around at the time, only women, who tried to escape when they saw the approaching group. The attackers drove them back to the inn and beat them up. The innkeeper attacked the assaulters, her husband also came back from the fields, and later local peasants came as well. There was a big brawl and a fight, yet in the court the attackers claimed that they did not beat anyone: "We did not have any weapons, just some had sticks and two had hatchets"²⁶ (*ibid.*, 434). The anger of the locals probably resulted from the fact that peasants from another village stormed into the inn without the village owner's permission, and wanted to arrest the suspects and bring them to court. This was a violation of the rights of the owner and the existing rules. The testimonies also indicate that the innkeeper and her husband had also defended the Gypsy women, not recognizing the legitimacy of the accusations or attempted arrest.

The Kraków municipal acts contain two entries from 1736 regarding a dispute related to Gypsies. In March, a case was brought to

²⁶ Translated from Polish: "ani my też żadnej broni nie mieli, tylko jedni laski a dwóch siekierki."

court by one Franciszek Krajowski, administrator of the properties near Kobyla, not far away from Kraków, who lodged a complaint on behalf of several peasants from nearby villages against Stanisław Ryłski, owner of the village of Klucze who according to Krajowski had been sheltering Gypsies who had inflicted many damages on the neighbors (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 160, 805–806; DOC.2). Krajowski accused the Gypsies of stealing more than a hundred beehives, as well as robbing a peasant from a neighboring village. Ryłski, however, replied that there were no Gypsies in the village. For this reason Krajowski filed a complaint against Ryłski on behalf of the injured parties. As the court official delivering the statement of claim testified, he saw Gypsy women walking around the village (*ibid.*, 808).

The complaint about Ryłski with regard to sheltering the Gypsies was most likely not just an imputation, as the following entry indicates that he had had rather close contacts with Gypsies. The complaint made Ryłski fear that he would not only be accused of lodging Gypsies, but also of being their accomplice, especially since the Gypsies had stolen several horses from the monastery in the village of Mogiła. The next entry to the acts is a complaint lodged by Ryłski against the Mogiła Monastery and its prior regarding the stolen horses. In the beginning he explains that as soon as he returned, as he had not been present in the village at the time of the robbery, he ordered the Gypsies to return the stolen horse, while other horses had been already returned earlier. He testified that he had also sent two Gypsies to a prison in Kraków (*ibid.*, 951). Thus Ryłski had Gypsies on his estate and probably had some business contacts with them, since returning the stolen horses would not have been possible if he had not been in contact with them. We do not know why he decided to send two Gypsies to a prison in Kraków. The pretext for the complaint against the Mogiła priory is that he had not received a receipt either for the Gypsies or for the returned horses, thus “taking care of [his] innocence”²⁷ he lodged a complaint to the court.

The instance of Gypsies staying on private properties was also mentioned in two entries in the Biecz books from 1738. The fact that

²⁷ Translated from Polish: “troszcząc się o niewinność swoją.”

Gypsies were staying at the property of one of the parties is self-evident and is not met with condemnation, even though there is a reminder that the law forbade it. It was not the sheltering of Gypsies, but their breaking into someone else's estate and the arrest of several Gypsies accused of theft that gave grounds for lodging this case, and entering it into the Biecz acts (*Castr. Biec.*, t. 248, 976). We learn from the text of the entry that two Gypsies appeared in court, including the leader of the group, in order to clear themselves of the accusations. The court found them, as well as the owner of the estate where they were staying, not guilty (*ibid.*, 985).

About a dozen years later, in 1751, another interesting case was entered in the same Biecz municipal books. The main issue was a dispute between two noblemen, a case of defamation and injured dignity. The defendant is an official responsible for public security of the *powiat* of Biecz. We know that in this part of Poland, officials were appointed whose responsibility was to look out for wandering Gypsies and make sure that the local population did not meet with any harm from their side. If Gypsies arrived in the *powiat*, the responsibility of such an official was to arrest them or make sure that they left its territory. The reason for the conflict and the ensuing court case was the fact that the official arrested Gypsies on private property without asking the owner for permission. It appears that Gypsies were arrested for simply being Gypsies, while they had committed no other offence. According to Boczarski, the owner of the estate, the official by the name of Janowski,

armed with several people entered [my property] and captured the Gypsies that were staying on my land and in the fields, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, locksmiths, possessing the good conduct certificates from many nobleman and landed property owners, never noted for any stealing—he captured the craftsmen, who were staying for longer because of the vessels, both iron and brass. He took away horses eight in number well as their various belongings such as clothes as well as different crafts [tools]. He bound the captured with ropes and acted towards those Gypsies according to his will. Then he brought those captured and bound

together with the horses and their belongings to [---] the village of Mruków and there committed numerous cruel acts with some of the subjects of Mruków.”²⁸ (*Castr. Biec.*, t. 262, 3; DOC. 3)

The arrested Gypsies were wanderers and not vagrants, as they lived in tents, used horses for transporting their belongings, and probably were there with their children as well. As we learn from the following fragment, this was not a group of male craftsmen, but a wandering community travelling with their families and all their belongings. We can see that they were engaged in tin- or copper-smithing, black-smithing, etc., and that their stay at Boczarski's property was related to their craftwork, probably mending or making new vessels. It appears that tin-smithing was brought by the groups travelling from Vlachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania. It is also possible that the Gypsies referred to in the Biecz acts had come from the south, yet they must have lived and travelled around Poland for some time, since they had introductory letters. They were not noted for stealing. *Rittmeister* Janowski arrested them probably because somebody had reported that there were Gypsies in the town and it was his duty to prosecute them. From the entry in the acts we learn that the court issued an order to arrest them and investigate the case, yet most likely nothing incriminating them had been found because the court did not sentence them to imprisonment.

Rarely do documents provide details regarding Gypsies, their way of life, or how they earned their living. The act discussed here is one of the few such documents containing information about their occupation; only records from 100 years earlier tell us more about Gypsy tin-smiths and black-smiths wandering around Poland.

²⁸ Translated from Polish: “zbrojnie z kilkoma ludźmi zajęchał i Cyganów na gruntach i polach przebywających i nocujących, kowali, kotlarzy, ślusarzy, świadectwa uczciwości swojej od licznych wielmożnych i szlachetnych mających, za kradzież nie notowanych - rzemieślników, którzy z powodu pewnych naczyń tak żelaznych jak mosiężnych dłużej przebywających - pojmał, konie w liczbie ośmiu oraz różne rzeczy ich własne tak do ubrania jak do prac różnego rzemiosła przynależne zabrał, pojmanyh powrozami związał i według woli swojej z tymiż Cyganami postąpił. Potem zaś pojmanyh i związanych razem z końmi oraz rzeczami ich do [---] wsi Mrukowa przywiódł i tamże liczne okrucieństwa z niektórymi poddanymi mrukowski uczynił.”

The decisions of regional sejmiks of noblemen imposed the duty of prosecuting, arresting or expelling Gypsies by specially appointed officials. Gypsies, however, were not the only problem for the *rittmeisters*; landed property owners and municipal authorities were often not cooperative, and there were cases when they actually made the *rittmeisters*' work more difficult. Such was the case in 1756 of a *rittmeister* from the Biecz region, Nidecki. Suspecting that a group of Gypsies robbed the church in Moszczenica, he attempted, with the help of several assistants, to arrest a group of 105 persons. He failed, but not because he had brought too few assistants. We read that "after getting, with God's help, eight of them, five escaped, so he delivered three of them under the guard of the Biecz City Council"²⁹ (*Castr. Crac. Rel.*, t. 198, 1691). The authorities of Biecz made nothing of Nidecki's dedication and for several days did nothing about the arrested, and later, while Nidecki was trying to chase the group, set them free. When *Rittmeister* Nidecki returned, bringing another two suspects, he learnt that the ones captured before had been set free and made a quarrel. Nidecki was insulted, while the city mayor of Biecz and city councilors mocked him and his *rittmeister* office. The quarrel turned into a fight, the *wójt* grasped Nidecki by the throat and "others with sticks and women with pokers and broomsticks started to strike him"³⁰ (*ibid.*, 1692).

The document above is interesting for us because it illustrates a situation not unfamiliar with the history of Gypsies in the Commonwealth. Despite the fact that there was legislation that banished Gypsies, and banned sheltering them under threat of being named an accomplice, cases of providing assistance to Gypsies, having business relations with them, or profiting from their criminal activities were nevertheless common. Various regional sejmiks, fearing theft and spying for Turkey by Gypsies, ordered *rittmeisters* to arrest or expel Gypsies. At the same time, local nobility provided lodgings to Gypsies on their properties, with matters going even so far as it was in the case in Biecz described above, where local townsmen released the

²⁹ Translated from Polish: "z pomocą boską dostawszy ich ośmiu, z tych że pięciu uszło, trzech tylko Cyganów pod straż Urzędu Miejskiego Bieckiego oddał."

³⁰ Translated from Polish: "inni pałkami, a baby ożogami bić poczęły i kijami."

arrested Gypsies, making the *rittmeister's* performance of his duties and the enforcement of the law very difficult.

What also draws our attention in the above case is the unusually large number of Gypsies, namely 105 of them. The documents that we have discussed so far do not mention such great numbers. In fact, information with regard to the size of Gypsy groups is generally very scarce, posing a challenge for the researcher. Thus, we likely encounter an exceptional situation here, even if Nidecki did not precisely calculate the number of Gypsies and overestimated the size of the group. It is almost certain that the group is a wandering one. Travelling and living in such a big group would be almost impossible. A small group is much more mobile, less conspicuous, and has a better chance to receive permission for its stay and ensure its biological existence. A large community probably would not have been tolerated by the local population, conflicts would have been more frequent, and therefore it would have been easier to provoke an armed intervention by regional or national authorities. It is logical that in all the documents mentioning groups of Gypsies, the communities were comprised of several, sometimes up to a dozen or so persons, including children. A community of more than one hundred persons, as mentioned by Nidecki, indicates that most likely we have here a meeting of several wandering groups linked by family relations. Scholars of Gypsies are familiar with a phenomenon known as the “romano cello,” that is a periodical meeting of several Gypsy groups aimed at settling different issues, including wandering routes or some practical affairs. But most importantly the “celo” performs an integrational function: the members of the groups meet, young people meet one another, it is time for choosing future life partners for bringing up children, and for renewing the sense of community. Sometimes the aim of such a meeting is choosing a new leader, if the previous leader died or cannot continue to perform his function for some other reason. We most likely encounter one such situation during the case in question. Nidecki came across such a meeting of several extended families either holding a regular gathering of the whole group or a meeting aimed at electing an elder. It is possible that some members of the group had indeed robbed the church in Moszczenica, but it is more likely that some gang of thieves, either

local or not, committed the robbery, assuming, rightly so, that the Gypsies would be the primary suspects.

The other documents from this century referring to offences by Gypsies, mainly thefts and robberies, are not so interesting. In December 1744, Jerzy Dettloff Count Fleming, a general of the Lithuanian artillery and administrator of royal properties, lodged a complaint against a group of Gypsies from Kobryń (a city in the south of Belarus) to the court in Brześć (today a border city between Poland and Belarus). We have seen before many documents where Gypsies were accused of a theft and the owners or leaseholders of villages had protected them, especially when they profited from the Gypsies' criminal activities. This is a rather unusual case involving a large group consisting of several noblemen and Gypsies together with their *wójt*. However, according to the text of the act, it was not the Gypsies who were the main initiators of the crime, although they had participated in robbing the Jews in question. What is interesting is the fact that the owner of the landed property where the Gypsies were sheltered, Rudnicki, was not only exploiting the Gypsies to his advantage, but also had a close relationship with them (*Brest. grodz. sud*, t. 56, 1311–1312).

When the person pursuing the Gypsies reached Rudnicki's property, "he found there all the mentioned criminals, the Gypsies with their wives and children, residing in the estate,"³¹ and when he tried to arrest them. The property owner with a group of armed assistants stood in defence of them and did not allow them to be taken away. We do not know how this case developed, but it did not finish soon. According to annotations to the complaint, the dispute regarding the robberies of the Jews from Kobryń by several local noblemen lasted for at least ten years.

It is not clear whether the reason for such unequivocal defence of the Gypsies by the local and probably minor nobility was their collaboration in criminal activities. Among the Gypsy surnames "Stefanowicz" is mentioned several times. This is a surname characteristic for the Gypsies living in the Lithuanian and Belarusian lands

³¹ Translated from Polish: "pomienionych złoczyńców, Cyganów wszystkich z żonami i dziećmi we dworze rezydujących zastał."

of the former Commonwealth; it is common even today among the Chaładytka Gypsy-Roma, who came to Poland as part of the repatriations after the Second World War. The mentioned Gypsies were probably local people, leading a semi-settled life, and were related to the local population, including the nobility, by various economic ties.

Another court case regarding the sheltering of Gypsies who had stolen horses is from the Oszmiana region (today in Belarus) from 1758. The accused was Godlewski, a nobleman, at whose property some Gypsies were staying. Godlewski refused to hand the Gypsies and the horses over to the authorities (*Oszmian. grodz. sąd*, t. 52, 1971–1972). The plaintiff demanded the arrest of “Jan, the Gypsy *wójt*, two Kazimierzes, two Antonis, Michał, Bazyli, Franciszek along with their wives and children and other accomplices”³² (*ibid.*, 1971v–1972). The ending of this case also is not known.

Reading these documents one is left with the impression that sometimes the landlords who provided shelter to Gypsies or issued permission for their stay at the estate were guided by calculation, planning to use the Gypsies for robberies, on the assumption that in case they were caught, they either would run away, or it would be difficult to prove that they were acting on the initiative of the nobleman. We find such a case in the account of the prior of the Ochora Monastery in Mohylew, *hegumen* Orest. The monastery was robbed by Gypsies, who stole equipment and one hundred rubles, and beat up the monks and servants. They then returned to Kamionka, a village belonging to Gedrojc, where they were staying permanently, and from where they set off on their thieving escapades. They shared the loot: Gedrojc took the money and the Gypsies took all the stolen goods (*Archeogr. zbornik*, t. II, 1867, LXX).

Horse dealing along with the skill of handling and caring for horses became Gypsy occupations to such an extent that they began to be associated with both, the professions and horse stealing. From documents dating from the previous two centuries we know that Gypsies had often served at private properties in the eastern parts

³² Translated from Polish: “Jana wójta cygańskiego, Kazimierzów dwóch, Antonich dwóch, Michała, Bazylego, Franciszka, z żonami i dziećmi onych, i innych in complicitate będących.”

of the Commonwealth. Among those servants there were also horse grooms. The documents from the 18th century lack this sort of information. We could assume that such a way of life led to full assimilation to the point that one's origins could have been forgotten. Only when there were any disputes between members of the nobility might one of the parties sometimes recall that the other had Gypsies in service, and that could be used to discredit or incriminate the opponent. Such was the case of a dispute between Marianna Chrebtowiczowa, the owner of Janówka (in the Grodno voivodeship), and Franciszek Grobicki, the owner of Olszanka, who owed her money (*LVIA: Listy "G," F. 1387, ap. 1, b. 21, 20*). Private correspondence from this period also indicates that owners of villages and estates themselves, without the aid of the courts, coerced confessions from Gypsies, and punished them for suspected offences (*LVIA: Zbiór listów Platerów, Nr 107, 579–579v; LVIA: Zbiór listów Platerów, Nr 124, 594–594v*).

It is interesting how during the course of this century the image of Gypsies changed radically and how shallow relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies became. In the second half of the previous century, attempts had been made to manage the situation of Gypsies, but the majority of appointments of Gypsy elders and kings come from the 18th century. Earlier laws that had banned providing shelter to Gypsies and banished them from the country were not revoked. There were people among the nobility who accepted appointments to be Gypsy overlords as a reward for their services, and who were hoping to profit from holding that office. During the same period of time when successive Gypsy kings were appointed, Gypsies were increasingly perceived as thieves and criminals, according to archival materials. Such a considerable distance between Gypsies and the rest of the citizens of the Commonwealth probably led to various forms of aggression towards Gypsies, which resulted in their isolation and the intensification or continuation of hostility. The analysis of 17th-century documents does not lead to the conclusion that the Gypsies' way of life and activities, including those in conflict with the law, could explain this deepening distance towards them in the 18th century. Therefore, we should assume that the formation and spreading of simplified, stereotyped opinions were the reasons for the changes in the non-Gypsy community's perceptions of them, and

for their rejection. Of course there were indeed Gypsy criminals who attacked and stole, yet the number of such cases is not so significant when compared to the number of crimes committed by non-Gypsies, such as Jews, Ruthenians, Poles, and others. We need to remember that in many cases the landed property owners providing shelter to Gypsies coerced Gypsies to steal. The burden of responsibility most often fell on Gypsies and not on the patron-nobleman, for whom it was easier to deny his complicity.

We know from the 19th-century literature that there were many cases of lynchings and acts of violence against Gypsies and their very arrival, including putting up tents, could often spark aggression on the part of the local community. Hostility and the assumption of criminal inclinations, without any concrete accusations, were enough for pogroms, often posing a threat to the lives of Gypsies. Though I could not find any evidence of such attacks in the 18th century documents, this does not mean that they did not take place. The only such account from the 18th century known to me comes from Bogdan Baranowski's book, *Ludzie gościńca w XVII–XVIII*.³³

A group of Gypsies, a *tabor* of four carts, came to the village of Obryte. The next day a child disappeared in a neighboring village. Suspicions were cast on the Gypsies, and people demanded that they give the child back. A search of their camp did not give any results. Then the peasants of Obryte decided to force the Gypsies to admit to kidnapping the child. A majority of the group managed to escape, but the attackers captured several women and a boy. The women, tortured, beaten, and burnt with wood from fire, eventually died, and the boy was beaten to death with sticks. The later discovery of the corpse of the drowned girl brought about a change of mood. Part of the local population went against the attackers, while others tried to defend them. In addition, nearly all the participants of the lynching began to deny their part in it. The case received a lot of attention and the authorities undertook an investigation. Only eight participants of the incident were held accountable and received a rather lenient punishment, namely five strikes with a lash. One of the participants

³³ An error in the reference to the discussed document makes it impossible to reach the original, and for this reason I present the account of the attack on the Gypsies in Obryte (in central Poland) on the basis of Baranowski's book.

who had behaved in a defiant way during the investigation received a harsher punishment: ten strikes with a lash (Baranowski 1986, 239–241).

Commentary is unnecessary here. The very presence of Gypsies in the neighborhood made the peasants from both villages believe they were guilty, and they stopped looking for any other explanations of the girl's disappearance. Thus, the conviction that Gypsies were a criminal people became widespread in the 18th century: if any crime had been committed or suspicious event occurred, such as a theft, robbery, the disappearance of a child, when they were around, they certainly must have been the perpetrators. This conviction did not always lead to vigilantism, but often enough it led to pursuing Gypsies, their arrest, and accusations before the court, which has been well-illustrated in the presented documents. The case in Obryte is particularly drastic, yet the perception of the Gypsies and the attitudes towards them allow us to assume that such situations as pogroms and lynchings could have happened more frequently.

The documents demonstrate how the attitudes towards Gypsies evolved, and how perceptions of them along with mutual relations changed since their arrival in the 15th century. For several centuries they had been just one of the many elements of the ethnic mosaic of the Commonwealth, and they were not rejected simply because they were Gypsies. Even the arrival of wandering Gypsies fleeing persecutions or looking for a better life did not bring about a fundamental change in the attitudes towards them. Only in the 18th century did the distance towards Gypsies start to deepen considerably. The Gypsy way of life was less and less accepted, while more and more people were offended by their difference and their lack of adjustment to the law of the land. Undoubtedly, the evolution of the idea of statehood and the type of the state, manifest in the changing attitude towards the "others", is an important factor bringing about the changes that Gypsies fell victim to. The currents of enlightenment reaching the country by the end of the century started to influence the attitudes and perceptions of part of the ruling elites and contributed to the modification of the law. Yet, they did not change the perceptions of the majority society, especially those living in villages and small towns, and it was their attitude that predominantly influenced the mutual relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies.

To sum up the conclusions following from the discussion of the documents in this chapter, consider the following points.

- 1) The beginning of the 18th century was not particularly different from the previous century. Gypsies were still wandering, receiving introductory letters. They engaged in trade and craft. Being a Gypsy did not automatically qualify a person as a suspicious individual. Accusations of robberies and thefts were not more frequent than in the previous decades.
- 2) A clear dissonance between the non-Gypsy community and Gypsies can be observed starting from the thirties of the 18th century. The majority of 18th-century documents refer to complaints against Gypsies and come predominantly from the south of the country, recorded in the Biecz, Kraków, Sącz, and Sanok books. They don't seem to always testify to a growth in Gypsy criminality, but they certainly demonstrate an increase in prejudices against Gypsies.
- 3) The documents demonstrate that Gypsies sometimes committed offences on the suggestion of, or in collaboration with non-Gypsies, and found shelter on the landed property of the nobility.
- 4) This must be one of the reasons of legal disputes, since when the officials specially appointed by sejmiks were trying to execute the law and drive Gypsies from the territory covered by their jurisdiction, this resulted not only in conflicts with Gypsies, but also between representatives of the nobility.
- 5) The increase in the number of complaints led to prejudices and the spreading of the stereotype of Gypsies as a thieves, criminals, and kidnappers. As a result, attacks and pogroms against Gypsies also intensified.
- 6) The greater amount of detail in some of the court documents of this century in comparison to what is found in the documents from the previous centuries allows us to learn more about the organization of their groups and their way of life. We learn about occupations practiced by them, their way of living and travelling. We also find accounts of situations known to us from the 20th-century literature on the Gypsies, which leads one to conclude that it was during this time, or even earlier, that some of the Gypsy communities were being formed, e.g., the Polska Roma.

manifestatione ad premissa mediantem.

75. Krajowski m. Subditor de Koscielecacalis Bonus, i Rybski Manife. Natur & in Continen. Trenci. Cinga. De Urzedyu Atornuozarych Grodzkich Starostach Krakowskich, owolwie przyszedszy Udozony Franciszek Krajowski Dobr. wsi Kobyta do Krasotwa Wismickiego Januie Cwiesconego Xcia Janusza. miedzianka Wielkiego Xięstwa & Pienickiego Driedzielnego nalezacy Administrator Smięciem Praco. witych Janusza Kule z Kasyra ze wsi Kosiela Woyciecha Duka ze wsi Bo. kura tegoz Januie Cwiesconego Xięstwa Jan. guska Pryncypata dwego Dobrusnow Ro. Jaska Pazy z Bolkura ad pryncypalora Bona Pazy zegouna nalezacych Poddan. nych za Ktorych rzeczy wistosci z dobro. męgiez szczy z presentibus zapisanie się czynigcy takowa przed Urzędem nurieozarym Grodzkim Parosanskim Krakowskim prze. ciwka Udozonemu Januszkowowi Rybskiemu Dobr. wsi Kluczew Dopeporowi wzgł. dem niżej wyrażonych rzeczy zanosim. niestacy atoto. Itenże Udozony Rybski. przeciwko Prawu z Jarney stupnosu sobie po.

ABOVE, OPPOSITE AND NEXT SPREAD

DOC. 2 · 15. 03. 1736. The entry in the Kraków municipal records of the complaint by Franciszek Krajowski on behalf of the subjects from the village of Kościelec against Stanisław Rybski, the owner of the village of Klucze, who allegedly sheltered Gypsies who were stealing from the mentioned subjects and the account of the following arrest of the Gypsies. *Castrensia Cracoviensia Relationes*, t. 160, 1736 [APK (1)]

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Spawo Riedy allowiem Cyganom którzy to są
mnie te pondus terra sex mundi, ludzi różnych
przez Kradzieże, Dobrych, Kłopotliwych, reclinatorum
wtychże Dobrach, Kłopotliwych, Kłucach, pozwala y
onych konserwuje, a ci Cygani mając takowe
reclinatorum, Szekody wielkie, Gładomogra:
nieczym y, datyżym robia, najprzód w Roku
przeżłym, Tyżycyżnym, Kiedmsetnym, Trzy, dzie-
śnym, Pięćym, weteri, Boleżynie, upodanych
Woyascha, Duka, y, inższych, dwóch, przecz, to
Kłopotliwych, przyjaciół, przed, Kłopotliwym, Bo-
żego, narobienia, wydał, potym, w Roku, tera-
żniejszym, Tyżycyżnym, Kiedmsetnym, Trzy,
dziesiątym, dziesiątym, dnia, drugiego, Miana, wno-
cy, z, piątki, na, sobotę, przycz, do, wsi, Ka-
mela, do, chaty, przy, witego, Franciszka,
Kula, tam, najprzód, drzwi, u, izby, z, Kłopotli-
wych, potym, poszli, do, komory, w, sieni, Gład-
cy, tam, Kłopotliwych, odbrzy, rzeki, różne, tam, są,
dobre, które, się, rejestrem, pokazą, pobrali, y, po-
Kradli, a, ceden, z, nich, stat, z, reclin, u, okna
na, wanie, żeby, był, kto, wyszedł, przy, ratunku
nie, wstat, tak, tedy, pomógł, sobie, poddani, Fran-
ciszek, Kula, y, Kasper, nazajutrz, w, sobotę,
to, jest, dnia, trzeciego, Miana, czepią, z, posła,
Kowania, czepią, z, powiesi, ludzkiej, udali,
się, z, atem, Cyganami, aż, do, wsi, Kłuców,
gdzie, przycz, do, reclin, u, urodzonego,
Rybskiego, a, wydanie, takowych, Cyganów, z, to-
dziu, Kłopotliwym, to, Boddanym, u, Kłopotliwym, w

οδρουν

Odpowiada że Cyganow u niego u siebie nie ma
 y tak ciż poddani bez odebrania Satisfakcyi ode
 musieli potym dawać dziesiętego znaczna i edzie
 manifestant do tegoż wsi Hluczow chęć owę
 Krzywdy tychże ubogich poddanych winydykować
 gdzie nie zapłać żadnego z Urodzonych Rybskich
 Matzonkow tyśho Urodzonego Puthoskiego
 namiey tuż, którego schowanie o wydanie
 Cyganow albo użyczenie z nich sprawiedliwo.
 Si: gdzie tenże Urodzony Puthowski powia
 da iż się takowi Cygan w Dobrach Hluczach
 nieznajduie, tak tedy Urodzony manifestant
 nie wskorawszy odrachab. Dla czego ponie
 mioni poddani zewsiow Rozwielcy Pol
 ana widze iż bydx tak znacznie przez
 tychże Cyganow ukrzywdzonemu do obrony
 Prawa Koronnego uciekają się znowu a
 znowu przed Urzędem niniejszym Urodzonym
 Starosundum Krakowskim przez terażniey
 tego manifestanta osobście tu stawajęcego
 oto cyfryto Solennie manifestuię się jako
 niniejszey Manifestacyi przyrzeczenia
 umniejszenia albo poprawienia w zupeł
 nej moey Zachowując. *Plac subinde*
Ministerialis Generalis An: Prodrus Tho:
mas Nodrzyk de villa Porba Legosia ad
officium et acta presentia Casper Capitan
Cracoviens personaliter veniens in iuram me
vere ac fidelis Relatōis publice libere in

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licet recognovit verba. Istyma Urzędowną rekruty.
 yg. Jm. Pana Michata Ardyńskiewicza Dobry Jawni
 Onwieconego Jm. Jm. Stanisława Koźmickiego
 kiedys z poddanych zeldów Kosułka y Pol
 ucia to jest Franciszka Kulewoyacha Dubka
 y Kaspia dnia dziesiątego miesiąca marca Ro.
 Kuterazmiejszego Tysiącznego Jednasetnego
 Trzydziestego i Piątego z Ichmianami Pany Pła.
 chą to jest Franciszkiem krajowskim y Mi
 chatem Pawluszem do wsi Kluczów Łoboszy.
 Jm. Pana Stanisława Ryłskiego podległych wo.
 łwie z urzędem y tam niezawsty obojga
 Ichmian Pawła Ryłskich tylko Jm. P. Kule
 wskiego we Dworze na miejscu Ich Cyganów
 tamże we wsi Kluczach zastających o Bra.
 dźierz różnych rzeczy we wsi Kosielcu w cha.
 tynie Pracowitego Franciszka Kule przez tych
 że Cyganów w Roku terazmiejszym popełnio.
 ng także o wydarcie Jm. Kulek dziesiąt prya.
 Now przeczot. Roku przepiętego Tysiącznego Jedn.
 setnego Trzydziestego Piątego we wsi Polkowie
 Pracowitemu Woyniechowi Dubkowi y innym
 we wsi Polkowie u tegoż Jm. P. Ryłkowskie.
 go aresztowatem y Urzędownym arestem
 zawziętem y przywziętem Którego Aresztu
 tenże Jm. P. Ryłkowski nieprzyjęt powiada.
 iąc że tu we wsi Kluczach Cyganów nie ma
 a ca wożny widziatem cgm kiedy się wten
 czas podczas bytności tam Naszey Cyganki
 po wsi przechodziły. Co tak a nie inaczej jest

Zeznane

nifestanti Reservata et precusculata facultate.
Boczarski, Jtra Janowski Protr.
Ad Officium et aucta Praesentia Castrensia Capitanealia
Bicensia Personaliter Veniens Generosus Josephus Bo-
czarski Bonorum Tractus Mucoblesensis Gubernator Jo-
hannem gravi cum Incuria in et contra Generosum
Josephum Janowski Districtus Bicensis Reunitatis
Publica Roth-magistrum Officio Praesenti defert
Protestationem ex Jo. Lucia Supradictus Genero-
sus Janowski Feria sexta post Festum Imma-
conceptionis Beatissime Virginis Ma-
xima huc fuit Dies undecima Mensis
Anno Praesente Millesimo Restingente

ABOVE, OPPOSITE AND NEXT TWO SPREADS

DOC. 3 · 02. 01. 1751. The entry in the Biecz municipal records of the complaint by Józef Boczarski, the administrator of the Samokłęski Tract landed property, against Józef Janowski, rittmeister of the Bielsk powiat, with regard to the unlawful arrest of a group of Gypsies in the village of Mruków.

Castrensia Bicensia, t. 262, 1751 [APK (I)]

Anno Quinquagesimo Rendes Bonorum Ville Mne-
 kowa ad Bona Principalia Tractus Mucollensis
 Spectantes et Pertinentes nulla facta prius vel
 minima Curie Mucollensis requisitione nec
 aliqua Notitia ad Modernum Protestantem arma-
 ta manu cum aliquot Personis super in-
 quitavit ibidemque Cyngaros in finibus et cam-
 piis transcendendo commorantes et Pernoctantes fam-
 fabros Orfabros Sijfabros Testimonia per Multos
 magnificorum ac Generosorum Probatis Rur ha-
 bentes in furto non notatos. Imo artifices Solent
 propter Memoranda nonnulla vasa tam ferrea quam
 dea tantisper commorantes captivarit. Equos in Num-
 ro Octo ac Varias Res illorum proprias tam ad ami-
 ctum quam ad labores varia arte Spectantes et Per-
 tinentes intercept, captivos finibus ligavit et ad del-
 le sui cum eodem Cyngaris procepit per post versa-
 plivatos ac ligatos una cum equis ac rebus eorum pro-
 priis ad Bona muencensis Ville Mnehora adduxit
 ibidemque per multas violentias cum nonnullis
 subditis Mnehorensibus fecit per post vero ad-
 vocatum Mnehorensem ad se Protestantem ut adve-
 niret ad eundem Generosum Janowski misit satis-
 faciondoque quomodocumque oratione Modernus Pro-
 testans discepit post adventum vero sui Protestan-
 tis ad Bona eadem Ville Mnehora Item Gene-
 rosus Janowski Interrogavit se Protestantem U-
 trum permittit eundem Captivos Cyngaros de Bonis
 huius extrahere vel etiam pro huius opem ire ad quan-
 Interrogationem Modernus Protestans Respondit his
 formalibus verbis. Iahes ict ut m m Pan b m uia

domaci, tak, y masz ich juz w m. Pan pruz:
 Zanych, tak sbie ich w m. Pan woz niebroni
 Zaster, za niemi ani ja, ani Bromala nie porem,
 Quos saliter captivatos una cum Rebus illorum
 omnibus secum accepit et ad Bona villa Piet-
 gnyonla Item Generosus Janowski cum suis fa-
 milis ac alijs hominibus suis habitis absceit,
 Ibidem ac laboriosum Lukaz Senio Rutens Ho-
 minem Juratum avenit Cybana propter Equos dare
 sibi vi et violenter demandavit Qui quidem La-
 biosus Senio prefata Cybana se habere reu-
 sarit Prefatus Generosus Janowski eadem Cy-
 bana omnino sibi iteratis vicibus dare demanda-
 vit ad Franeam se se propinquavit tandem
 Senio aufugientem cum eadem evaginata fra-
 mea persecutus est furtim aliquot eadem
 Senio per post objecit, et juramentum coram
 se Prefatus Generosus Janowski in Bombarda
 oblungi in mensa posita duobus digitis superba
 dem Bombarda appositis prestare injunxit Qui
 Laboriosus Senio satisfaciendo ejusdem
 Generosi Janowski mandato, flexis genibus
 et apositis imprefata oblungi Bombarda duo-
 bus digitis prestare voluit, venum Item Ge-
 nerosus Janowski eundem Senio a Prefato
 Juramento explendo revelavit hec Formalia
 ad eundem laboriosum Senio alloquendo Por-
 to Juz ci poganski cynu od rzezy co mi zpi-
 neta z calicem wolnym cynie wolno mi
 bylo to chi z toby uczyni to takiego Thorza

swego Bocharshiego maie gdy by był S
 tali a tali toby był nieda konywoy. cynd
 w Dobach Panskich ludom y iaby był by chcy
 ganow niemogt trac gdy by mi ich był zbrandat
 ale mi ich dobrowsnie baige sy omie trac.
 niebrnit y toki bym mogt co chce ucyne
 a on by sy o to nieupominat. Post subreca:
 tas tali modo in Bonis Ville Puznyem
 violentias et sui Protestantis varias diffam
 mationes Honoris lesiones cum prefatis Gyn
 garis ad Bona Villa Bednarka discessit ibidemque
 in detentione et Carceribus sub Custodijs Prefa
 tos Gyngaros una cum liberis Prefatus Generous
 Janowski tenuit, non contentus antenonibus vio
 lentijs ac Prejudicijs clauditis tractus et mi
 schlescensis illatis suis Protestantis lesioni
 bus diffamationibus irrealibus et nunquam
 probandis objectionibus post subreccutan Pre
 fatorum Gyngarorum per eundem Generous
 Janowski Captivationem non denegatamque ex
 traditionem imo spontaneam permissam Pre
 fatus Generous Janowski loco gratitudinis ali
 que adhuc ad officium Castrose Capitaneale
 Bieccense pro Julijj Terminum Tactorum
 jam habens Captivos et incarceratos apud se
 met Ipsum Gyngaros pro Statutione Bonu
 p Gyngarorum introducendo eodem officio a
 arcto citatione vero vexatoria et Protestan
 tem provocavit innalis et nunquam pro
 banda coram varijs Personis ac si aliquas

dationis et conuptionis a Prefecti Gygari Non
 Generoso Protestans percipient obicit denique
 Decretum iniquae inquisitionis in proximis e
 ducente et Corroborationis arresti obtinuit. Quo
 quidem Gygari licet si Decretum Statutio
 nis et Corroborationis arresti Stetit, attamen
 nulli Gygari post subsecutum officium
 arrestum in Bonis tractus Strusoblescen
 sis officioso arresto.) per post vero Prefatus
 Generosus Janowski in subsecutionem post
 lationi praevenerunt Decretum iniquae inqui
 sitionis educende corroboracionis arresti.
 utaque Iudicia Castrensia Capitanealia
 Ricensia Ipso Feste Sancti Thomae Apo
 stoli anno eodem Labenti Millesimo Re
 ptingentesimo Quinquagesimo Gygari
 feminas cum liberis quos habuit Prefa
 tus Generosus Janowski apud se in carceribus
 et Custodijs detentas nocturno tempore sub
 profunda nocte ad Bona Strusobleski ut fer
 tur fama per subordinates Personas ac si
 ad Sebastianum directas et ordinatas premisit.
 has Personas ac Gygari Prefatus Modernus
 Protestans nec vidit nec recipere voluit. has
 Gygari Prefate subordinates Personae con
 sulto in Bonis Villae Strusobleski ut fama
 volat in Pernitiam fortune nec Protestantis
 fraudem et dolum libere permiserunt et quo
 nam posset aliter Modernus Protestans penitus
 ignorat

ignorat Quare Modernus Protestant ad Patri-
 nium Legum Regni configendo ne exinde fortune
 ac Substantie sue aliquot patiatur Detrimentum
 et jacturam respectu premissonum omnium tam
 violentiarum, quam honoris lesionis tum
 irrealium et nonquam probationum obiecti-
 onis aliorumque prejudiciorum illationis
 iterum atque iterum coram officio et actis
 Presentibus Castrensibus Capitanealibus Re-
 censibus contra Supradictum Generosum Ja-
 rowski Colennissime Protestatur offerendo
 premissa omnia etiam corporali juramento
 uti Vir Bone fance prestando tam Inqui-
 sitionibus emundaturum ac pini inuigo
 vindicaturum velle salva ejusdem Prote-
 stationis sue autione Correctione Meliorato-
 ne aut in aliam formam: si eo opus fuerit
 pleno transmutatione in Robore Reserva-
 ta et precustodita facultate.

Feria Secunda est

Gypsies at the Landed Properties of the Sanguszko and Radziwiłł Families

A recurrent motif in source documents is that of Gypsies staying on private properties. This was often accompanied by accusations regarding some violation of law. It is striking that almost all of these complaints concerned minor nobility, leaseholders, or the owners of a village. There was only one case of a more prominent person, that of Wielopolski, the starosta of Biecz and later Kraków, who had been charged with tolerating Gypsies on the basis that he had not punished the owner of a property under his jurisdiction and the relevant city authorities as had been initially demanded by the plaintiffs. On the other hand, we do have at our disposal a considerable number of documents referring to the large landed properties of the Radziwiłł and Sanguszko families, which indicate that Gypsies were both permanent residents on these properties and frequently travelled within them as well. Yet, not a single time, as far as we know, was a complaint with regard to their presence there lodged in court. One is left with the impression that the Commonwealth legislation was enforced in a less rigorous way in those regions, and that the owners established their own rules regulating the stay of Gypsies. Church *wilkierzes* also testify to this. Fundamentally, this was the case at least to some extent.

The sources have already demonstrated on many occasions that Gypsies, despite their different way of life, were accepted and were one of the elements of the ethnic mosaic in the country. However, only in the eastern territories of the Commonwealth have we observed people identified as Gypsies who led a settled life. Many lived in cities, traded with the local population, entered into different forms of contracts, lent money, or, in other words, had the trust of the local non-Gypsy community. We also know that there were Gypsies at the

Potocki family's landed property in Podole, as well as on the properties of the Sanguszkos. However, only at the landed property of the Radziwiłłs did they form a more numerous community and found such favorable conditions; probably nowhere else were they treated in such a friendly and just way.

The long-term stay of large Gypsy groups, their travelling between fairs with their craftwork, or settling in cities must have led to some conflicts. Above all, the stay of Gypsies at such large private properties demanded regulation. For this reason, irrespective of the appointments of the king, the owners of some private properties appointed their own Gypsy overlords or chiefs. In this case, their authority was limited to the territory of the property, and it was usually Gypsies who were appointed to this post. This may indicate that it was not so much about appointing an overlord, but rather confirming by this post someone who already was at the top of the Gypsy community hierarchy, though it had to be a settled person. This phenomenon was characteristic of the landed properties of the Sanguszkos and Radziwiłł families, located on the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It is possible that Poles from the southeast of the Commonwealth who sheltered many Gypsies also appointed such overlords, but there are no documents available to us confirming such a scenario. A closer look at the documents related to the landed properties of the Sanguszkos and Radziwiłł families reveals much information about the appointment of overlords and the persons holding these offices. Although there are in fact only three such acts available to us, it seems that there may have been more.

It is not known when the Sanguszkos and the Radziwiłłs started to appoint overlords over Gypsies living in their landed estates, but it is clear that they must have perceived the Gypsies not as some devious people and vagrants, but rather as useful residents on their properties. The Sanguszkos' appointment documents demonstrate that Gypsies were not considered intruders, and one could even assume that they were encouraged to permanently settle. And here we do not mean individual people or families, but communities united by social links and probably also family ties, their way of life, and their leader. The document issued in Zasław in January 1727 refers to two Gypsy groups. We clearly encounter two groups living alongside one

another, and not just an accidental collectivity. In a rękopis we read the following: "I give this, my charter, to Polish and Vlach Gypsies, I make Bazyl Mikołajewicz a *wójt* over the Polish ones and Baran *natione*¹ Gypsy over the Vlachs"² (*Arch. Sanguszków*, manuskrypt 441/4, 319). The following fragment is very important here: "...that permits them to recruit the Gypsies from anywhere and settle them in the Konstantynowskie Przedmieście"³ (*ibid.*). This is a clear encouragement for Gypsies to settle in Zasław, and the author of the document is evidently interested in having them live at his estate, which implies that they could not have been perceived as criminal or undesirable persons. We do not know their occupations, but most likely it was black-smithing and horse trading, as many documents from the end of the 17th and from the 18th century from the eastern parts of the Commonwealth mention these professions in reference to Gypsies. Sanguszko established an annual tax from each Gypsy: "each Gypsy should pay every year two minted *thalers* for the rent"⁴ (*ibid.*). It could not have been for those two *thalers* that Sanguszko was treating the Gypsy settlers in such a favorable way. The document for Mikołajewicz and Baran was issued by Paweł Karol Sanguszko. Five years later, in 1732, he appointed Bartosz Aleksandrowicz as the overlord of Gypsies in his properties in Zasław and Konstantynów. We do not know what happened to Mikołajewicz and Baran, but it is possible that the Vlach Gypsies had moved somewhere else and Mikołajewicz died. We know that Aleksandrowicz was the overlord of the Polish Gypsies, and he was almost certainly a Polish Gypsy from a group living in the eastern territories of the Commonwealth. This name was popular among Gypsies, especially in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Aleksandrowicz's jurisdiction covered a rather considerable territory:

¹ *Natione* is ablative of *natio* (Latin) that means nation, people, origin. *Natione* Gypsy means "of the Gypsy nation or origin."

² Translated from Polish: "Daję tę kartę moją Cyganom Polskim i Wołoskim, nad Polskimi czynię wójtem Bazylego Mikołajewicza, a nad Wołoskimi Barana *natione* Cyganów."

³ Translated from Polish: "którym pozwalam zewsząd zaciągać Cyganów, i onych osadzać na Przedmieściu Konstantynowskim."

⁴ Translated from Polish: "każdy zaś z tych Cyganów powinni corocznie po dwa bite talary czynszu."

the distance between the two cities that were under it, Zasław and Stary Konstantynów, was more than 60 km. Aleksandrowicz also made decisions with regard to which newcomers could stay. The document also gives us information regarding their occupation, which was trade and craftsmanship. The document signed by Paweł Karol Sanguszko was addressed to stewards, keepers, and commissioners of his landed property: "Having recommended modesty and skills, Bartosz Alexandrowicz, *natione* Gypsy, is to have authority over other Gypsies. I give him the right to be a *wójt* in my city of Zasław as well as in Stary Konstantynów"⁵ (*Arch. Sanguszków*, dok. Nr 305; DOC. 1) One of the responsibilities of the newly appointed *wójt* was to ensure that the Gypsies did not commit any thefts or offences either on the Sanguszko's estates or outside. Gypsies also were obliged to pay taxes, just as other residents, and it was Aleksandrowicz's duty to collect the levies: "Whoever of the Gypsies shall live in my Zasław and Konstatynów estates, from each of them every year Bartosz shall collect two thalers of good money, not hiding any of it, and give the money to my governors for my treasury"⁶ (*ibid.*). We do not know how effective Paweł Karol Sanguszko's regulation was, and whether Gypsies were indeed paying the tax, or whether Aleksandrowicz had any authority among Gypsies. Yet, they must have recognized his office if he was appointed by the property owner, who had the relevant mechanisms of repression at his disposal. Although we found no documents that could tell us more about the functioning of the *wójt* office, it is clear that Sanguszko's interest in Gypsies was not just episodic. These two documents separated by a five-year period indicate that Gypsies had their own place among the residents of Sanguszko's estate. With all certainty, at least several families lived permanently on his property, with wandering groups arriving from

⁵ Translated from Polish: "Mając zaleconą skromność Bartosza Alexandrowicza *natione* Cygana, i jego sposobność, aby miał nad innymi Cyganami zwierzchność. Daję mu to prawo na wójtostwo, tak w mieście moim Zasławiu, jako też w Starym Konstantynowie."

⁶ Translated from Polish: "cokolwiek tedy Cyganów będzie mieszkało w dobrach moich zasławskich i konstantynowskich od każdego gospodarza corocznie odbierać będzie powinien Bartosz wójt po talarów dwa bitych, dobrej monety, nie tając żadnego, i PP Gubernatorom moim do skarbu mego oddawać."

time to time. Such an office would not have been established for merely a few individuals or for wandering groups alone.

In the Sanguszko archive collection (APK, the Wawel department) there are also other documents referring to Gypsies, including two testimony protocols from 1716, with regard to a brawl at an inn and the battery of a Gypsy. The brawl started with one of the inn guests accusing a Gypsy of fishing for money in his pocket. Then he started beating the Gypsy, and the inn-keeper tried to defend the Gypsy. The case of attempted theft was not cleared up in the court, as it appears that the real cause of the brawl was the quarrelsome nature of one of the guests, exacerbated by copious amounts of vodka. The assaulted Gypsy was most likely a person settled and living in Dubno for a long time. We do not know his occupation, but it is possible that he was a horse dealer. This is suggested by the words of one of the witnesses, according to whom the Gypsy, named Korniej was drinking with horse minders. The Sanguszko archive contains more documents (from Żytomierz, today in Ukraine), but the majority of them come from the last decade of the 18th century, a period that is not covered by this work.

We know more about the Gypsies at the Radziwiłł estate in Lithuania. The documents indicate that they possessed the rights enjoyed by other subjects, were not treated as troublesome characters, and they had their own leaders. As was indicated in the previous chapters, the presence of the Gypsies on the Radziwiłł's landed property was mentioned towards the end of the 16th century. However, the only documents that give us an idea about the situation of Gypsies at the estates of the Radziwiłł family in the eastern territories of the Commonwealth, including means of controlling them, come from the beginning of the 18th century.

The institution of Gypsy overlords appointed, or at least confirmed, by the Radziwiłłs in the town of Mir (today in western Belarus) dates back to the beginning of the 18th century, as we learn in a document from 1719 from the Radziwiłł collection. This document is an "obligation letter" given by Józef Marcinkiewicz, the Gypsy elder, to Samuel Hucin, a townsman of Mir. Marcinkiewicz borrowed 20 Polish zlotys from Hucin, and the document is a receipt confirming the received sum of money and a commitment to repay it. The note

added below informs us that the money must be repaid in two installments at one week intervals (*Arch. Radziwiłł*, dział XXIII, teka 92).

We do not know whether the Marcinkiewicz mentioned in this document was the Gypsy elder by choice of the Gypsies themselves or was also appointed by Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł. There is also another document related to Józef Marcinkiewicz. The letter is not dated, but most probably it comes from the end of 1719 or the beginning of the twenties. In the letter we can read: "I, a poor townsman and citizen of Mir of Your Grace, Merciful Duchess. I bow down to her worship's feet with my humble request"⁷; and the letter ended with the following: "Józef Marcinkiewicz, the Gypsy Elder, with his company"⁸ (*Arch. Radziwiłł*, dział XXIII, tom 150). So, we know that Marcinkiewicz was a townsman of Mir, and since he identified himself as the elder of the Gypsies, his position must have been confirmed by the owner of Mir. Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł died on August 2, 1719, and it is likely that he was the person who made Józef Marcinkiewicz the elder of Gypsies in Mir. The phrase "with his company" indicates that in Mir and its neighborhood there were many Gypsies comprising one united community, and not just a collection of individuals. However, it is not likely that the rest of the group possessed civic rights. The inventory of Mir from 1720 mentioned only Józef Marcinkiewicz. According to this entry, he was a rich person, having three partially developed places at Słonimskie Przedmieście and two plots of land on the territory of the so-called Włoki Staromiejskie (*Arch. Radziwiłł*, dział XXV, Nr 2448, 31, 32, 40). This probably played a major role in his appointment as elder.

We do not know anything about the rights and duties of the elder since not a single nomination act is available to us. The second of the discussed documents, signed by Józef Marcinkiewicz, is addressed to the widow of Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, Anna of the Sanguszko family. After the death of her husband she managed the estate for about a dozen years. The phrase "Your Grace Duchess" proves that

⁷ Translated from Polish: "Ja ubogi mieszczanin i obywatel mirski Waszej Księżęcej Mości Pani mojej miłościwej. Upadam do Jaśnie Oświeconych stóp pańskich z tą moją pokorną supliką."

⁸ Translated from Polish: "Józef Marcinkiewicz Cygan Starszy z kompanią swą."

Marcinkiewicz addressed her. The document is a complaint about the unjustly levied city tax, in which Marcinkiewicz requested lowering the tax to the previous amount (*Arch. Radziwiłł*, dział XXIII, tom 150).

The reasons for the arrival of so many Gypsies to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania are not obvious. It is possible that one of the attractions was its cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, and subsequently greater tolerance. Gypsies were a rather numerous community there, living sometimes in larger groups, is a fact confirmed by evidence from many family archives, municipal and court registers as well as memoir literature. Additionally, many Gypsies from this region did not wander. Their stability meant settlement, the accumulation of property and the lifestyle adopted by the craftsmen-bourgeois sector of the society. At the Radziwiłł estates this was the case at least until the beginning of the 19th century, according to the information in the family documents.

Another document dates from the same period as the “obligation letter” issued by Józef Marcinkiewicz in Mir. This document was written in Wisznice in Podlase, another property of the Radziwiłłs, in October 1718, and signed by Kazimierz and Ewa Pulikowski, “a married Gypsy couple”⁹ (*Arch. Radziwiłł*, dział X, unordered acts). We learn from this document that the Pulikowskis did not repay their debt to Lejba Nossoniuk, citizen of Wisznice, on time and faced the threat of a court trial. A local nobleman, Kazimierz Wisznicki, repaid their debt. The “letter” commits them to repay the debt and elaborates the legal and financial consequences of failing to meet the payment deadline. The Pulikowskis must have been settled people and not poor ones if somebody was willing to lend money to them and a local nobleman was ready to repay their debt. They certainly must have been trustworthy people.

Almost a quarter of a century later we encounter the name of Pulikowski in a document issued by Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł in Bielica, in the former Lida *powiat*, in Belarus. This is a letter addressed to administrators, stewards and other officials of his estate, informing them “that I have allowed the Gypsies seeking my protection and offering their submission to me named Jan Pulikowski with his

⁹ Translated from Polish: “małżonkowie Cyganie.”

son-in-law Matjasz, another son-in-law Jędrzej Fonk and two sons, Karol and Bartek, to live in my city of Bielica; these Gypsies, my subjects, should receive all manner of protection following from their expressed submission to me and should not be prevented from living on my property or trading at fairs and markets”¹⁰ (*Arch. Radziwiłł*, dział XI, sygn. 140, 46). There follows a warning that the Gypsies should not cheat Radziwiłł’s subjects in trade or steal, under the threat of “a certain punishment by throat at the first instance of any excess”¹¹ (*ibid.*). The law was harsh, but so long as they committed no offence, they could trade or be craftsmen and were entitled to the same rights and privileges as other residents of the Radziwiłł estates. It is evident that the Gypsies were not perceived as fundamentally evil or criminal people, although the Radziwiłł family’s favorable attitude concerned settled Gypsies, or those who wandered within the landed property or nearby villages, and did not violate any laws. Whereas Gypsies who committed crimes were persecuted, it seems likely that they were ones who did not live on the Radziwiłłs’ property.

The city of Mir played a special role, and many Gypsies lived and travelled there. The Marcinkiewicz family, known from documents discussed earlier in this chapter, was related to this city. It is not clear when they settled in Mir, and the first mention of their family name in the documents was in the 18th century. The *Rejestr wybierania Czynyżow z Miasta Mira y z Całey włości mirskiej od S: Jana Chrzciciela w Roku 1705 po S: Jan Chrzciciel w Roku 1706* (The Register of Rent Collection from the City of Mir and the Entire Estate from the Day of John the Baptist of 1705 to the Day of John the Baptist of 1706) mentions that Matyjasz Cygan bought three undeveloped places and one quarter of a developed place at Przedmieście Słonimskie, whereas Jan Marcinkowicz paid the rent for one quarter of the place

¹⁰ Translated from Polish: “Iż garnącym się w protekcję i poddaństwo do mnie, Cyganom, na imię Janowi Pulikowskiemu z zięciem Matjaszem, drugim zięciem Jędrzejem Fonkiem i synami dwoma, Karolem i Bartkiem, pozwoliłem mieszkanie w mieście moim Bielicy; którym to Cyganom jako poddanym moim, ażeby wszelka protekcja od wyż wyrażonej zwierzchności dana była, tudzież aby onym na jarmarkach i kiermaszach w dobrach moich znajdować się i handlować nie broniono.”

¹¹ Translated from Polish: “pod niepochybnym za najpierwszy eksces na gardle karaniem.”

(probably leased) and one quarter of a place that he holds as security (probably for a debt). Both plots of land for which Jan Marcinkiewicz was paying rent were located on the territory of the so-called Włoki Staromiejskie (*Arch. Radziwiłł*, dział XXIII, teka 92, 13, 21). The inventory from 1720, mentioned earlier, notes Jozef Marcinkiewicz's ownership of three plots of land at Przedmieście Słonimskie, on the left hand side, where Matyjasz Cygan had his property. Hence it is likely that Matyjasz was from the same family as Józef. It is also possible that the Gypsies of Mir had originally used only their names with the nickname "Cygan" and only in the 18th century started to use family names, with time omitting the additional explanation that they were Gypsies. The difference in the family names of "Marcinkowicz" in the 1706 document and "Marcinkiewicz" in the 1720 document is an example of different forms of the same family name. Hence, we can agree with Tyszkiewicz, who claimed that Gypsies had already settled in Mir during the 17th century and received civic rights after some time (Tyszkiewicz 1989, 267).

Property inspections and inventories give us a great deal of information about the Gypsies of Mir. The Marcinkiewiczzes were a growing family or a complex of families related to one another. *Inwentarz Hrabstwa Mirskiego z 1757 r.* (*Inventory of Mir County, 1757*; hereafter cited in text as *Inventory*) mentions several Marcinkiewiczzes living close to one another as the owners of different plots of land and gardens. All lived in Przedmieście Słonimskie. The *Inventory* mentions Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, Tomaszowa Marcinkiewiczowa, the wife of Tomasz Marcinkiewicz, Ignacy Marcinkiewicz, and Marcin Marcinkiewicz (*Arch. Radziwiłł*, dział XXV, Nr 2464, 9, 13, 16, 19). We do not know anything about any other Gypsy families, as the inventories do not mention them, or it is impossible to distinguish them from non-Gypsies. The listed plots of land, gardens, and fields indicate that the Marcinkiewiczzes must have been a wealthy settled family. At the same time there is no doubt that they were perceived as Gypsies, since the described documents related to Józef Marcinkiewicz as well as later ones demonstrate this. The Marcinkiewiczzes were also trustworthy people since others lent money to them. Another piece of evidence that they, or at least some of them, were highly respected people can be found in a document from 1772. This *Regestra ruchomości w Bogu*

zeszłego P. Jakuba Wirkowskiego Obywatela Mirskiego wraz po zejściu z tego świata sporządzone z magistratem Miejskim Mirskim (The Register of Properties of the Deceased Jakub Wirkowski) mentions Ignacy, who was a member of Mir city council or held another municipal office (*Arch. Radziwiłł.*, dział XXIII, teka 92). The register was signed by Felicjan Bernatowicz, the *wójt* of Mir, and three other persons, including Ignacy Marcinkiewicz. It is obvious that he was not an ordinary citizen and must have been recognized as a trustworthy, honest person, if his signature was used to certify the reliability of the property register.

An exceptionally important document related to Gypsies on the Radziwiłł properties is a so-called “protection letter,” issued at the castle in Nieśwież in 1778 by Karol Radziwiłł for Jan Marcinkiewicz. The text of the privilege begins with the following: “I announce by this my protection letter that I take Jan Marcinkiewicz, the Gypsy elder, townsman, and citizen of my city of Mir, with the whole of his company settled in the same city and being in possession of houses, under my protection as my own townsmen and subjects”¹² (*Arch. Radziwiłł.*, dział XXIII, teka 92; DOC. 2). This entry illustrates a point that I have already mentioned several times. Despite the existence of legislation banishing Gypsies from the country and prohibiting their sheltering, there were frequent cases of their settlement on private estates and close contacts of various sorts, including business, services and craft, between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. The analysis of these cases leads one to the conclusion that the law of the Commonwealth was directed mainly against wandering Gypsies, or the Philistines, as they were called, whereas this law was not enforced in relation to settled families, which were rather numerous, as well as small Gypsy groups. As we have seen, some Gypsies led fully settled lives, others travelled in search of work, but their stays could have been rather protracted, from several weeks to several months. This fact was exploited by some noblemen who lodged complaints

¹² Translated from Polish: “Oznajmuję tym moim protekcyjnym listem, iż Jana Marcinkiewicza Cygana starszego, mieszczanina i obywatela miasta mojego Mira, z całą kompanią jego w tymże mieście osiadłą i domy swoje mającą, biorę w moją protekcję jako własnych mieszczan i poddanych moich.”

about their fellow noblemen to strengthen their arguments in disputes with them. The case in point is clear: the Gypsies from Mir, the Marcinkiewiczes, were settled people who had adopted for the most part the principles of the non-Gypsy townsmen's way of life. At the same time, there was no doubt with regard to their ethnic origin. They probably kept contacts with wandering Gypsies, and it is also possible that they earned their living in a similar way to that of the other Gypsies on the Radziwiłłs' property. The phrase about Marcinkiewicz's company without a doubt means that this was an organized group headed by a leader, albeit a settled one. Giving evidence to my earlier conclusions and speculations, the document issued by Karol Radziwiłł expressly states: "especially when it is not against the law, Constitutions and Statutes of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania that ban sheltering only the wandering Gypsies, travelling from town to town, not the settled ones; the settled people who are not rascals should not be covered by this law for any reason"¹³ (ibid.). Radziwiłł's letter gave Marcinkiewicz "with his entire company" considerable freedom of movement, recognizing that it was a necessary part of their way of life and earning their living. Radziwiłł's letter continues: "I ask that all ensure that my subjects, the mentioned Gypsies of Mir, are not harassed at fairs, markets and on the roads, and that they are allowed to trade freely, and that nobody takes justice into their own hands in their regard, and that they be allowed to travel anywhere without any troubles, because I declare that I shall protect my own subjects against any harms and for them with every law *agere*."¹⁴ The most important sentence for scholars of the history of Gypsies, and probably for Marcinkiewicz himself, is at the end of the letter: "I also allow this Jan Marcinkiewicz to punish criminals, to prevent those not settled in our towns from trading at fairs and markets, unless they have permission of the Gypsy elder, Jan Marcinkiewicz,

¹³ Translated from Polish: "zwłaszcza kiedy to nie jest przeciwko prawu, Konstytucjom i Statutowi WoXaLitto, które Cyganów luźnych tylko, nie osiadłych, z miasteczka do miasteczka przejeżdżających i tułających się ochraniać i takim dawać protekcję zakazują; co zaś ludzie nie hultaje, ale osiedli, pod to prawo z żadnej przyczyny podpadać nie powinni."

¹⁴ *Agere* (Latin) means to do, lead, take action or court proceedings.

townsman and citizen of my city of Mir”¹⁵ (ibid.). This is indeed a confirmation of the authority of Jan Marcinkiewicz over the Gypsies on the Radziwiłłs’ properties. We do not know the full scope of his authority and jurisdiction. While it is likely that it covered the whole of Karol Radziwiłł’s landed property in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, it certainly covered more than just the territory of Mir and its closest vicinity. Marcinkiewicz had the right to decide whether to admit Gypsy wanderers to fairs and markets and the right to punish Gypsies on the property. Thus, the Gypsies must have respected his will. He probably had the support of Radziwiłł’s servants, who would help if some Gypsies dared to ignore his will and the office of the appointed elder. Since the document does not say anything about collecting taxes, this was probably done by Radziwiłł’s tax collectors. We also do not know whether the Radziwiłłs appointed any Gypsy overlords or elders in other estates. It is possible that there was no such need if Gypsies in other properties did not comprise any larger groups. But it is clear that in the Mir estate this form of managing the Gypsies was implemented from the 18th century, or at least from its second decade until the times of the partitioning.

The letter discussed here today belongs to the AGAD collection. What is intriguing, however, is the following. The letter is without doubt an original. Usually the original of such a letter was given to the person for whom it was issued, whereas copies or information about the issuance of such a document were retained at the chancellery. How can we explain the fact that this letter was found among the other documents in the Radziwiłłs’ collection? We may only assume that after the death of Jan Marcinkiewicz, the letter was returned to the chancellery, or that he himself returned the letter upon resigning or being recalled from the office. There are also many other plausible versions; however, due to the lack of evidence we can only speculate. The document has been preserved in very good condition. Either it had not been used at all, or it was very carefully kept, which would have been rather difficult for someone constantly on the move. Is it

¹⁵ Translated from Polish: “Pozwalam temuż Janowi Marcinkiewiczowi występnym karać, nieosiadłym w miastach naszych na jarmarkach i targach handlów prowadzić nie dozwalać, chyba za dołożeniem się Cygana starszego Jana Marcinkiewicza mieszczanina i Obywatela miasta mojego Mira.”

possible that Jan Marcinkiewicz never collected the document, and all that has been written about this elder results from lack of knowledge and over-interpretation?

The city of Mir, as we have seen, played a special role in the history of Gypsies. But greater fame, both within the country and beyond its borders, was enjoyed by Smorgonie (today in Belarus), known for its Bear Academy, a school of bear taming, from where bear-trainers headed towards the different cities of Europe. The Academy in Smorgonie was not an idea of Gypsies, but it was the only school in the Lithuanian-Ruthenian lands of the former Commonwealth that trained bears. The tradition of training bears for domestic purposes was a rather old one, about which we can learn from an account of Hieronim Lippomano, a Venician ambassador travelling around Poland in 1575 (*Relacya...*, tom I, 1864, 247). It is not known when the school in Smorgonie was established, possibly as early as the 16th century. We learn about the school for the first time from the account of a French Jesuit who stayed in Poland between 1687 and 1689. He wrote: "I was also shown the Academy where they train bears that are later shown from city to city around Europe. The city where they teach them those exercises, so that they later can be demonstrated with such deftness and ingeniousness is called Smorgoń"¹⁶ (Ziembicki 1933, 36). No early record, however, mentions that it was Gypsies who minded the bears. It is possible that it was Karol Radziwiłł who settled the Gypsies there and gave them the school under the supervision of Jan Marcinkiewicz, the Gypsy elder from Mir. According to Kiersnowski (1990, 177), the bears were trained mainly for the purposes of the Radziwiłłs' estate in Nieśwież; yet, there is no evidence to support this claim. The most interesting accounts of the school and its methods of training come from the first quarter of the 19th century, the period of the Bear Academy's greatest glory. The November Uprising (1830–1831) and the ensuing confiscation of the Smorgonie properties brought the end of it (Kiersnowski 1990, 178–180).

¹⁶ Translated from Polish: "Pokazywano mi też Akademię, gdzie się tresuje niedźwiedzie, przeznaczone do oprowadzania od miasta do miasta po całej Europie. Miejscowość, w której uczą się one owych znanych ćwiczeń, aby się niemi potem z taką zręcznością i niby zmyślnością popisywać, zwie się Smorgoniem."

The Bear Academy certainly had an important influence on the lives of Gypsies from that region. It was a significant factor in building a sense of community, a form of legally earning one's livelihood, and a platform for contact and cooperation with non-Gypsies. Though there are some records and memoirs about the training center in Smorgonie, little is known about this institution. The lack of a systematic study on the topic with archival research, leaves us unable to know where the truth ends and the legend—mythologization of the original institution—begins. There are many uncertainties. According to a 1788 document, "*Opisanie dóbr Smorgoń dziedzicznej JW. Księcia JMci Dominika Radziwiłły*" (A Description of the Smorgoń Properties), there are 186 homesteads, 582 free townsmen, 274 Jews, 14 Tartars, and 5 Gypsies (LVIA: F. 1280, a. 2, Nr 761). This is clearly a very small number of Gypsies for the headquarters of the famed academy, where there was believed to have been such a concentration of Gypsies. *Inwentarze Majętności Smorgoń* (Inventory of the Smorgoń Properties) from July of the same year does not mention any Gypsies. Skomoroska¹⁷ Street is mentioned in the register of the streets and their residents, but no Gypsies are mentioned as residents of that street (LVIA: F. 1280, a. 2, Nr 562). Yet it was on this very street that the Bear Academy was situated, according to Tyszkiewicz (1867, 22). According to the census of Smorgonie from 1795, among the free people there were only five Gypsies, who lived at the place of some Smorgonie townsmen (LVIA: F. 1280, a. 2, Nr 563). The image of the Academy presented by Tyszkiewicz indicates that it was a large institution where bears were trained for the purposes of Gypsy groups and the local nobility, who wanted to show off with an original "servant" who could bring water, serve at the table, or do other tricks. The accounts by Brandt and Tyszkiewicz are valuable descriptions of images seen by them some time ago. In particular, an important detail mentioned by Brandt draws our attention. On the way back from Moscow with Napoleon's troops in 1812, he stopped over in Smorgonie and happened to be accommodated at the place of a bear-tamer. Brandt presented a detailed account of the training, yet he did not mention that the trainers were Gypsies, nor did he describe his host as a Gypsy (Brandt 1904, part III,

¹⁷ From "*skomoroch*," a wandering entertainer, actor, musician, bear-tamer.

146–147). What was the reason for this situation? Could it be that Gypsies represented only a small part of the Smorgonie bear-tamers, or perhaps were they so assimilated that their Gypsy roots were inconspicuous? The two works that contain the largest amount of information about the training school are Tyszkiewicz's memoirs and Gluziński's treatise, and both were published the same year. It is not clear what records or documents Gluziński relied upon. The text devoted to the Smorgonie bear training school was published in 1867, yet the account about this institution, the presented image and information come from the period of at least eighty years before. Since Gluziński does not provide any sources, we cannot be sure where the borderline between reality and literary fiction lies. It is possible that the cages with animals, training equipment and rooms for bear minders were located outside the city. Even if we assume that this had been the case, it is still surprising that the inventory of the Smorgonie properties, listing not only the residents of the city but also of the neighboring villages, mentions so few Gypsies, and does not mention the Smorgonie Academy at all. There are too many different records with regard to training bears in Smorgonie for us to believe that Gluziński just invented a vision that took on a life of its own. At the same time we lack any source-based information and relevant documents, to the best of my knowledge, in order to learn something more about the Academy. It is difficult to explain such a situation when we consider that the Academy existed until the thirties of the 19th century. Only systematic research of the Radziwiłłs' documents in the Belarusian, Lithuanian, and Polish archives could help shed some light on this issue and provide answers to the fundamental questions. For now, we can only draw attention to the discrepancies between the commonly known image of the Academy, and what the registers and inventories of the Smorgonie properties tell us.

I do not agree with the scholars of the history of Gypsies in the Commonwealth who claim that the appointment of Jan Marcinkiewicz by Karol Radziwiłł was a manifestation of megalomania and an appropriation of rights of the royal chancellery. The documents presented here do, however, indicate that the Radziwiłłs' conducted a consistent policy towards Gypsies, threatening thieves and cheats with punishment, and taking those who lived peacefully under their

protection, as well as requesting their administration to do the same for them. This probably explains to a large extent the mystery of such a considerable number of Gypsies having lived in the Lithuanian-Ruthenian lands of the former Commonwealth. This policy must have been continued by the successive Radziwiłłs, if in some towns there were whole groups of Gypsies who were owners of different properties, including plots of land, buildings, and shops.

The appointment of Gypsy overlords or elders by the royal chancellery as well as at private estates is a specifically Polish way to establish the rules governing the stay of Gypsies in the country, and their relations with the rest of the society. It led, at least in some regions, to the formation of a system of co-existence of Gypsies alongside other communities, as one of the elements of the demographic character of a given region. These Gypsies were not a group that formed its ethos around the notions of threat and escape. Co-existence alongside other communities had a very considerable impact on their own way of life and culture, bridging the distance between them and the remaining local communities, yielding as a result faster and easier assimilation.

DOCUMENTS

*Paweł Karol Lubaniewicz nie Białym Kowale i Mokosach
y Rakowie Xraze Sanguskiego. Strach na Wroniezu Jarosławu
by Tamowa. Marszałek Nadworny W. C. L.*

DOC. 1 · 13. 03. 1732, Zasław. Paweł Karol Sanguszko, the royal marshall of Lithuania appoints the Gypsy Bartosz Aleksandrowicz the *wójt* of all Gypsies in Zasław and Stary Konstantynów.

Archiwum Sanquszków doc. pergaminowy, Nr 305 [APK (I)]

AR.dz.XXIII

Wzajemny tym noim przedzielnym listem wasm wobec i każdemu zawobna. Komu by o tym wiazieli należało. i Janu Marinkiewiczowi Cyganu starszemu, Mi-
szczanina y Obywatela miasta mojego Altra z całą kompanią jego wtamie Miśnie obywateli y domy swoje mające, biorąc swoje protokuby, jakichkolwiek
Miśczan y poddanych moich, zwłaszcza kiedy to nie jest przeciwko prawu. Konstytucyom y Statutowi 105. i 106. Lit. i. Ktoś bywał bywał tylko nie o-
siedzieli z mieszczami do Miasteczka przesiadanych y tutajzych wio ochraniać y takim dawac protokuby y zaślazęć wciąż ludzie nie huttego, ale
owidzieli, pod to prawo z żadnej przyczyny podpaść nie powinni. Równy tedy wszystkim, aby wspomnianemu Cyganowi moich Miśczan, na formach
kuch. Jazgarach, Drogiach y zowiniach nie agostnowali, wolno handlować, wozami wolno wsiadaliwosi nie czynili, wolno wozem bezda-
ny ich konwoje przewozić, gapić się jako o własnych moich poddanych Równy być im, o nie każdemu sławom agosty deklaracji w Miśczanach
temuż Janowi Marinkiewiczowi wytyczonych karach, nieoddałem w Miastach pańczy na szermachach y Jazgarach handlować nie dawaliśmy, nie dawaliśmy,
chwała za dołożeniem im Cyganu starszego Janu Marinkiewiczowi Miśczanina y Obywatela miasta mojego Altra. Znow to his protokuby dla
wspomnie wagi y wiary stać własną podpisywać, bliżej mogą przysięgnąć, rozdawałem. Dat w Landu moim Miśczanach, Jazgarach widemost Rada
Kieracji Ciesnego Roku, mierzona lipca dwudziestego Starego czasu

David Lloyd Garrison
Vol. 21

Łódź, 1904

Conclusions

I cannot be sure that the history of the Gypsy presence in the Commonwealth presented by me in this work will not be considered by some activists of Roma organizations as insufficiently magnificent, or not dignified enough. As I have emphasized in the beginning, my intention was neither to depict the romantic image of popular culture nor to create a national or ethnic mythology, but rather to describe what I was able to find in various sources located in archives and libraries. That is, those archival sources that I managed to reach, the ones that were not destroyed or lost over the course of the centuries, or as a result of past invasions and successive wars.

Many scholars are of the belief that very few records regarding Gypsies have been preserved. It turns out, however, as we can see on the basis of the archival records discussed in this work, that Gypsies are mentioned in a variety of documents and rather frequently. What was even more unexpected was the considerable number of records referring to Gypsies dating back from the Middle Ages. I am also aware of the fact that what I was able to find myself, as well as what others had found before me, is still not everything, and most likely many records are still waiting for their discovery. Having spent many days and weeks in various archives, leafing through various acts and books, I have no doubt that I came across many records accidentally or because, as a result of so many years of work, my eyes had become particularly sensitive to certain letters and words (*Cygan*/Gypsy or *Philistinus*/Philistine), which has made spotting the records referring to Gypsies when browsing through books much easier. The dozens of meters of voluminous records standing one beside the other in the old documents archives in Kraków, Warsaw, Lwów, or Vilnius have been only partially studied and published, and may still

contain much information about the Gypsies. The reason for this is multifold: Gypsies have not been a topic of historians' interest, there has been no systematic long-term research, and this refers not only to Poland. Moreover, many sources containing potentially important information were destroyed during the last war, especially as a result of the bombing of Warsaw during the first days of WWII. The archive of the old municipal acts at the City Tower (*Wieża Grodzka*) adjacent to the Royal Castle, as well as the royal chancellery acts in the castle archives went up in flames. Various documents regarding a considerable part of the country had been kept there. These records probably included entries on the privileges granted to the so-called Gypsy kings and overlords, as well as copies of the original acts. (The fact that the text of the documents of the privilege for Gypsy overlords almost did not change for one hundred and fifty years indicates that there must have been some sort of a master copy of this act.) The Sandomierz books, which probably contained many records about Gypsies, as we can assume on the basis of other acts preserved in the Kraków, Lublin, and the Lwów archives, were also burnt down. Only a small number of the documents lost in fire had been studied and previously published. Thus, a considerable amount of information concerning Gypsies has been lost forever. Many records of the Gypsy-Roma presence were also probably destroyed in previous centuries, in particular those referring to their first arrival in Europe. It is an even greater pity that in modern times so many traces of their past vanished as a result of war and the barbarianism of invaders, limiting our knowledge and further impoverishing our capabilities to learn about the history of Gypsies.



Unfortunately there are no records made by Gypsies themselves, which is a fact that I have emphasized in the "Introduction" chapter. The number of documents (e.g., entries on complaints filed in courts or local authorities against other Gypsy groups) containing some information about their internal affairs and the relations between Gypsy groups is limited. Although these documents were registered by non-Gypsy officials, they provide information about complaints and charges against other Gypsies. This helps us to go beyond the

descriptions of non-Gypsy chroniclers, which is usually limited to information about the Gypsies' arrival and possibly some conflicts with the non-Gypsy local population. However, the vast majority of records were written by non-Gypsy authors who were replicating their own stereotypical opinions and fixed perceptions about Gypsies, albeit not necessarily out of bad will. The limited number of records that provide information about the internal issues of Gypsy groups, not to mention the complete lack of records made by Gypsies themselves, makes it impossible for us to learn the points of view and perceptions of those to whom this book is devoted, and to better verify the non-Gypsy opinions and descriptions. I have explained the reasons of this state of affairs. Being aware of the limitations of the source base, one can only have a more critical approach to the existing non-Gypsy sources and be more careful in formulating opinions on their basis. I have tried to adhere to this principle when writing this book.

Even the image emerging from these non-Gypsy sources is not the picture we are accustomed to, mainly on the basis of 19th-century literature. We do not encounter romantic wanderers, the tender weeping of the fiddle, or cruel and proud highwaymen. The picture that we can see on the basis of the discussed and quoted documents is much more ordinary, which in fact makes it extraordinary, due to its profound discrepancy with the stereotype and common knowledge. We see people who are similar to us, despite the differences in customs, social organization, or way of life. Even the information from 18th-century sources, dominated by the image closest to the stereotypes widespread until recently, is richer and much more interesting than our common knowledge. We do not know to what extent these records are representative. What we can observe is the change in attitudes towards the Gypsies of the local communities hosting them. It is necessary to emphasize that this change did not concern Gypsies exclusively. Generally the attitudes towards the "other"—foreigners, people of different race, language, religion, or culture—were changing. It also seems to be true that generally, as the centuries passed, ethnic antagonism grew.

On the basis of this we can assume that the diversity and cultural particularity of the contemporary Gypsy groups was formed during

the past two centuries, especially during the 19th century. This was a period of intensified group consolidation process, and the formation of identification mechanisms, together with a sense of identity and belonging. The processes universally observable across 19th-century Europe were additionally exacerbated by the fact that Gypsies found themselves on the margins of majoritarian societies. The consolidation of a sense of national identity, the glorification of one's own culture, and a focus on differences from the cultures of other communities also had an important impact on the nation-building process. This was probably one of the factors that motivated the dismissal or rejection of others, in particular those who were different in their way of life, behavior, appearance, and language from those recognized as one's own, the closest. During this period, Gypsies were being pushed beyond the margins, becoming "the others" to an extent never experienced before. An effect of this rejection by the mainstream population was the self-segregation of Gypsies from the rest, and taking shelter in their own ghetto of their customs, language, and community. State institutions, including judicial and administrative ones, were becoming more national or ethnic, rather than civic, and hence much more biased, from the Gypsies' point of view.

A comparison of the available archival records from the 16th and 17th century with those from subsequent centuries gives indirect evidence of this phenomenon. The 16th- and 17th-century documents contained many complaints by Gypsies and appeals to higher courts with regard to disputes between Gypsy groups. Sometimes these bore traces of conflicts between the local Gypsies and newcomers, and at other times the disputes were between two sides of the same group or even family. Referring to a non-Gypsy court in disputes between Gypsies indicated a degree of trust and the lack of a deep distance that would have made contacts between Gypsies and non-Gypsies impossible. This also serves as evidence for the lack of internal rules that would have prevented Gypsies from referring to non-Gypsy courts in the case of disputes or complaints against other Gypsies. At the time, referring to non-Gypsy courts, so popular among the Gypsy groups in the 20th century, was not perceived as betraying the principle that internal Gypsy-Roma disputes, even between different groups, must be settled within the Gypsy community. Contrary to previous

centuries, not a single case of Gypsies referring to state courts to settle internal disputes could be found in the 18th- or 19th-century acts, which are much more numerous than the older records. It is unlikely that during that period conflicts between Gypsy groups suddenly stopped. This change also cannot be explained by the Gypsies' greater mobility and more frequent changes in their places of sojourn, nor is it likely that it was brought about by harsher legislation and a more efficient law-enforcement system, irrespective of the internal policies of the partitioning states of the Habsburg Empire, Russia, and Prussia.

The cases lodged in non-Gypsy courts by Gypsies during the 16th and 17th centuries concern both settled as well as nomadic Gypsies. Significant legal restrictions, as well as the stricter implementation of laws against wandering Gypsies by law-enforcement authorities in the following centuries could have not only deepened the distance between the wanderers and the local populations, but also discouraged Gypsies from any contact with the judicial or administrative authorities. The nationalist movements and their intensification, especially in the 19th century, along with the awakening and formation of national awareness and sense of ethnicity also affected Gypsies to some extent, at least those inhabiting the former Commonwealth. The sense of belonging within individual Gypsy groups must have grown stronger, which resulted in distancing from other Gypsy groups, and most of all, in self-segregation from non-Gypsies. The existing documents do not give us sufficient grounds to claim this with respect to Gypsies. Yet, this interpretation appears to be very probable, especially if we bear in mind that the new intellectual currents and the awakening of ethnic and national identity during the 18th and 19th centuries clearly went hand in hand with the changes in attitudes towards Gypsies, the adoption of more restrictive legislation towards them, and were accompanied by the distancing of Gypsies themselves from the state institutions and judicial apparatus as well.

Contemporary anthropologists and historians recognize that one group's perceptions of another belong to the sphere of stereotypes and myth-creation with regard to "the other." Thus, the image of one group (e.g., Gypsies) in the eyes of another group cannot be treated

as an objective one, or as a factual reflection of the life and culture of this group. First and foremost, such perceptions tell us more about the describing group, in this case non-Gypsy: their world outlook and attitudes, their own place in the world, their system of values, fears, as well as the ways of distinguishing those who do not belong to the group. Being aware of this fact, I have tried to avoid expressing opinions that would be mere reflections of the non-Gypsy way of looking at, and describing Gypsies. We rarely find more detailed accounts in the analyzed documents, as usually the content is limited to the most basic information. But we can form some opinions and conclusions on the basis of a large number of available archival records accompanied with additional information. The works by Münster (1559) and Bielski (1976), cited in this book, are almost classic examples of such non-Gypsy accounts that reflect or project the mentality of their own group, its visions, fears, prejudices, and attitudes towards others. They serve as a certain cultural pattern of their own group. References to works like these have served as an illustration of the changes in attitudes towards Gypsies.

I hope that while presenting a considerable fragment of the history of the Gypsies (Roma) in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, I have managed to avoid such value-laden descriptions. Nonetheless, what I have presented in my work is only a fragment of the past: we know so little about other aspects of the existence of Gypsies, about their everyday lives and contacts with the local populations, while the voice of Gypsies themselves is not heard. The existence of persons registered in the Lwów and Kraków books in the 15th century, such as Micolay Czigan and Petir Czigan, who were not nomads, but large city dwellers, leads us to obvious questions: Who were they and where did they come from? Since the documents don't seem to indicate that they came as part of a larger group, more questions come to mind regarding their earlier history, their mother tongue, as well as their relations with other Gypsies. We are not likely to find answers to these questions, and we cannot sketch their earlier history in the Commonwealth without studying archival records from the countries located to the south of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Despite all of these reservations, I hope that this work will be useful for both the Roma as well as non-Roma scholars, and that it will encourage further systematic research and analysis of documents in European archives, which so far have been insufficiently studied. Without such research it is impossible to fill in the huge gaps in our knowledge of the Gypsies' past, their history, and culture formation processes.

Archival research and the study of old records requires time, patience, and adequate knowledge and skills. It would give me additional satisfaction if my work inspired researchers from other countries, such as ethnologists and historians. We know very little about the files available in the archives of the Balkan countries, Turkey, and Central and Eastern Europe. But there must be considerable sources of information that could prove significant for uncovering more about the history of Gypsies. Only a systematic search in the archives of different countries can give us a chance to learn more about the history of Gypsies in Europe. After all, this is a group of people that have been living on this continent for hundreds of years, yet we still know so little about their past.

This postulate or rather hope is even more topical in the context of the visible activation of the Gypsy-Roma communities in recent decades, especially in EU countries. Various programs supporting the Gypsy-Roma communities in many countries have contributed to the establishment of organizations, as well as the formation of a class of political leaders, who more and more often replace the traditional authorities. Moreover, these new political leaders are often young people, or at least people much younger than the traditional leaders. The reason for this is obvious: these younger leaders are better oriented with regard to contemporary world issues, possess modern technology skills, better understand the non-Gypsy world, and have learned to maneuver the various relevant institutions of different European countries. As a result of their awakened ethnic pride, as well as aspirations to the rights enjoyed by other European nations, including protection of one's culture, the Gypsy community faces a wide range of new tasks and issues. The challenges include the lack of a single standardized language and its transcription, as

well as the need to learn the community's history, which is a history that is not a legend told by elders, but is based on facts, told in an objective manner, and can explain the contemporary diversity of Gypsy communities in Europe and the world. Furthermore, this is not just a matter of learning about one's past, but also about being able to disseminate this knowledge, and introduce it to the canon of world history. In this context, promoting archival research as well as inspiring the Gypsy-Roma to undertake the quest for the knowledge of their own past through relevant studies has become even more imperative. I am deeply convinced of this.

Source materials

- AGAD — Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, Warszawa
APG — Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku
APK (I) — Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie, Oddział I — Wawel
APK (III) — Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie, Oddział III
APL — Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie
APO — Archiwum Państwowe w Olsztynie
APP — Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu
APW — Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu
GStAPK — Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin
IAL — Centralnyj Derżawnyj Istoryčnyj Archiv m. Lviv
LVIA — Lietuvos Valstybinio Istorijos Archyvas, Vilnius
NGAB — Nacyjanał'ny gistoryčnyj archiu Belarusi, Minsk
BC — Biblioteka im. Czartoryskich, Kraków
BJ — Biblioteka Jagiellońska. Oddział Rękopisów, Kraków
BL — Biblioteka Uniwersytetu we Lwowie
BN — Biblioteka Narodowa, Warszawa
BW — Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego
OSSO — Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław

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2. Metryka Koronna, t. XVI [chapter 1]
3. Metryka Koronna, kp. 86, k. 206v–207 [chapter 2]
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5. Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, nr 131, dz. 46 (lustracje), sygn. 119 [chapter 2]
6. Akta mielnickie grodzkie, nr 1 [chapter 2]
7. Akta drohickie grodzkie, seria II, nr 4, k. 390 [chapter 2]
8. Rózańskie grodzkie wieczyste, nr 7, k. 48–48v [chapter 2]
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12. Zbiór dokumentów papierowych, nr 1618/2 [chapter 5]
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14. Sigillata t. 5, k. 130v [chapter 6]
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REGISTER FOR GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

POLISH	HUNGARIAN	LATIN	BELARUSIAN	GERMAN
Birże				
Brzeg		Alta Ripa		Brieg
Dynów				
Gdańsk		Dantiscum		Danzig
Janiszki				
Kobryń			Kobryn	
Koszyce	Kassa	Cassovia		Kaschau
Kowno				
Kraków	Krakkó	Cracovia	Crakow	Königsberg
Lwów		Leopolis	Lviv	Lemberg
Merecz				
Mir			Mir	
Mohylew			Mogilev	
Muśniki,				
Niemokszty				
Oszmiana			Ashmiany	
Podole				
Połock			Polatsk	
Poniewież				
Rosienie				
Równe na Wołyniu				
Rużomberk	Rózsahégy			Rosenberg
Siemiatycze			Syamyatychy	
Skała na Podolu				
Smorgonie			Smargon'	
Szadów				
Szawle				
Warszawa	Varsó	Varsovia		Warschau
Wilno				Wilna
Wiłkomierz				
Wrocław		Vratislavia		Breslau
Zasław				
Żagory				
Żmudź				

CZECH/ SLOVAK	UKRAINIAN	LITHUANIAN	POLISH
		Biržai	Birże
			Brzeg
	Dyniv		Dynów
			Gdańsk
		Joniškis	Janiszki
			Kobryń
Košice	Koshytse		Koszyce
			Kowno
Krakov	Krakiv		Kraków
Lviv	Lviv		Lwów
		Merkinė	Merecz
			Mir
			Mohylew
		Musninkai	Muśniki,
		Nemakščiai	Niemokszty
		Ašmena	Oszmiana
	Podillya		Podole
			Połock
		Panevėžys	Poniewież
		Raseiniai	Rosienie
	Rivne		Równe na Wołyniu
Ružomberok			Ružomberk
			Siemiatycze
	Skala Podil'ska		Skała na Podolu
		Smurgainys	Smorgonie
		Šeduva	Szadów
		Šiauliai	Szawle
Varšava			Warszawa
			Wilno
		Ukmergė	Wiłkomierz
Vratislav			Wrocław
	Iziaslav		Zasław
		Žagarė	Żagory
		Žemaitija	Żmudź

Index

The Index is limited to the most relevant persons, places, and terms. Many names, especially those of Roma-Gypsy, are repeated in different documents from different periods, the most popular being Jan, Paweł, and others. For this reason, I limited the list of names only to those that appear most often. (Next to some names I added the specification of “author.” This refers to authors of early accounts and works on the Gypsies, mentioned in the book.) The same concerns the list of geographical names—I limited the list to most important geographical names including the names of places where documents were issued or those referring to the routes of wondering or places of longer stays of Gypsies. Additionally, the list contains important terms referring to ethos, professions, performed duties, and statuses.

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